The Prophets of Christendom

REV. W. BOYD CARPENTER

THE PROPHETS

OF

CHRISTENDOM.

SKETCHES OF

EMINENT PREACHERS.

BY THE REV.

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"The Lord gave the word:
Great was the company of the preachers:
Kings with their armies did flee."

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MDCCCLXXVI.

" Beati spirti che nel sommo coro
Si troveranno, o trovano in tal grado
Che sia in memoria eterna il nome loro."

PETRARCH.

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF PERSONAL KINDNESS

These Sketches are Dedicated,

WITH PERMISSION,

TO THE

REV. J. B. LIGHTFOOT, D.D.,

CANON OF ST. PAUL'S,

AND

LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, CAMBRIDGE,

BY ONE AMONG MANY

WHOM HIS WRITINGS HAVE HELPED.

PREFACE.

It will be understood that the papers in this volume (reprinted from the "Clergyman's Magazine") are only sketches. They do not aspire to the place of biography or criticism. They are mere outlines, put together with the hope that they may stimulate some to become better acquainted with the lives and teachings, the trials and the constancy of those whom I have ventured to call the Prophets of Christendom; for, notwithstanding personal infirmities, obscure and often erroneous views of some Christian principles, most of them may fairly be regarded as raised up by our Master to point back His Church and people to truths which had been forgotten, or which it was needful that the Church of their era should remember. Many bright names are absent; not from choice, but only because such a selection is necessarily

limited. In my choice I have been somewhat guided by the natural grouping of certain distinguished names, as in the case of the Eastern and Gallican Churches. Where great lights appeared in constellations it did not seem to me right or wise to break up the cluster. In other cases my choice has been guided either towards those whose names were most familiar to me, or to those whose influence seemed to bear witness to Christ's perpetual government of His Church, and whose lives and powers give rebuke to that littleness which imagines that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. It has been questioned whether the study of such men and their writings is of much real value. I venture to believe that it is. Such a study cannot fail to show us how much common ground there is among earnest Christ-loving men in every age — how certain Christian principles, though stated in diverse forms, are of power to heal the heart disorders of men in every land and time. And the Christian teacher may observe with profit the skill and painstaking energy with which men who were the Anakim of the pulpit sought to bring their teachings to bear upon the heart and conscience of the men of their own time. They will see that those wrought really

the widest impression upon mankind who had a truth to teach and some definite perception of the times in which they were called upon to teach; who neither fawnishly catered for the prejudices or the weaknesses of their contemporaries, aimlessly and pusillanimously letting themselves be swept away by the current; nor yet men who, blindly believing themselves to be living in a generation earlier than their own, obstinately limited their knowledge to the narrower bounds of the preceding age, and garnished their speech with the phraseology of their grandfathers. Rather were they men who, understanding their time, gained the power to modify and direct for good, if not to change the spirit, of the age.

To study the writings of such men apart from the history of their age is to do both them and ourselves an injustice, for in so doing we shall fail both to derive from their teaching the helps and hints which may profit us, and to weigh with fair judgment and charity the weaknesses, incongruities, and blemishes which can so easily be exaggerated or ignored. The vehemence, the self-assertion, the unyielding asceticism which we notice in some of the Eastern and Latin

Fathers finds its explanation in the luxuriousness, indifference, and worldliness of the times. Who can rightly appreciate either the strength or the weakness of Eckart, Tauler, and their associates, without remembering the frequent and natural tendency of the Mystic school towards speculative, if not actual, Pantheism? What is Luther, apart from a recollection of the corruptions of his age, but a violent enigma? And who can understand the force or value of Bossuet and his successors without some knowledge of the splendid ambitions and gilded vices of the Court of Louis XIV.?

But when seen in the light of their own era, and surrounded by their own contemporaries, men are neither so great nor so little as they are usually considered. They are not infallibles, nor utter blunderers; they belong neither to the kingdom of Brobdignag nor to that of Lilliput; but they are men, great men, but yet men of like passions with ourselves, whose zeal may stir our heart's languor, whose mistakes and errors may warn us, whose examples may stimulate us, and whose work in the world may encourage us to have faith that He who keepeth our Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

It only remains for me to acknowledge my obli-

gations to the many writers whose works I have read with interest, with profit, and delight. To say that I have found the value of the ordinary Church historians, Neander, Mosheim, Gieseler, Fleury, Milman, Robertson, is only to say what has been said a thousand times before. In treating of St. Chrysostom, the elegant biography by Rev. W. R. W. Stephens ("St. Chrysostom: his Life and Times") cannot fail to be of service, and few can read without interest the Abbé Martin's work, "S. Jean Chrysostome, ses Œuvres et son Siècle." Fialon's work on St. Basil ("Étude Litteraire sur S. Basil") has many good points. M. Leon de Roux has attempted to give an analysis of St. Basil's power as a preacher in his tract, "Étude sur la Predication de Basil le Grand." Both on St. Basil and his friend St. Gregory Nazianzen, the work of Weiss ("Die Grossen Kappadocier, Basilius, Gregor von Nazianz") might be consulted with advantage; and on the latter Dr. Ullmann's[1] work should by all means be read. On the Latin Fathers,

[1] This has been translated, under the title "Gregory of Nazianzum: his Biography and Opinions, a Contribution to the Ecclesiastical History of the Fourth Century," by L. Ullmann. Translated by G. V. Cox. London, 1851, 8vo.

"S. Augustin, ou l'Afrique au Cinquieme Siècle," par A. Biechy; M. de Pressensé's work, "Le Christianisme aux Premiers Siècles;" Thierry's S. Jerome, "La Societé Chrétienne à Rome," &c., are really interesting and useful. These, and other works too numerous to mention, I have found of value; and I have, as far as possible, indicated my obligations in the notes.

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I.

THE PREACHER WHO SPAKE AS NEVER MAN SPAKE.

"'Love, that within me speaks' in accents clear,
Forth from his lips anon so sweetly came,
That still its sweetness vibrates on mine ear."

I.

IT has been thought well that this series of papers should commence with one bearing His Name whose life and death have supplied the materials of all sermons and been the inspiring theme of all preachers. It is appropriate that this should be the case; but such a paper must necessarily differ in character from all that follow. We may indeed view Jesus Christ as a preacher of righteousness; but we cannot forget that He is our Saviour. We may derive deep and wholesome lessons for ourselves from His modes of stating and enforcing truths; but we must shrink from any but the most reverent handling of those words which are spirit and life. But while such a reverent hesitation is right and fitting, we cannot but believe that He who left us an example that we should follow His steps, designed that

His ministering servants should glean hints from His teaching. A large proportion of His discourses was addressed to those whose after-lives were spent in preaching the gospel. He constantly explained His parables to His disciples in private. Such special care may warrant our believing that He remembered the exigencies of those who would afterwards teach in His name.

Of the general influence of our Lord's preaching we have some simple but suggestive records in the Gospels. There was a suavity and persuasive force about His utterances — a freshness and naturalness which contrasted with the marrowless quotations and dry conceits of scribe and rabbi. Men wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His lips. Like a song it held His hearers entranced, and official men forgot their errand as they listened to Him, who spake as never man spake.

> "Lo mio maestro ed io, e quella gente
> Ch'eran con lui, parevan sì contenti,
> Com' a nessun toccasse altro la mente.
> Noi andavam' tutti fissi ed attenti
> Alle sue note."
>
> *Purgatorio* ii. 115–19.

The simplest and most uneducated classes, whether in the North or in the South—among the unlettered folk of Galilee or the townspeople of Capernaum and Jerusalem, took pleasure in His words. "The people came early into the temple to hear him." "The people were very attentive to hear him." "The common people heard him gladly." This need not surprise us, who find that the charm yet lingers about His words. As children we felt the attraction of His parables. Those stories of "the unforgiving servant," "the wicked and cruel husbandmen," "the unfitly clad wedding guest," claimed our earliest interest, and appealed to our infant understanding. Nor was there less charm in the constant allusions to the fair and familiar works of God around us, the trees, the grass, the lilies, the ravens, the serpent, the dove, the rain, and the wind. The use of such images suggested a mind in perfect harmony and appreciative sympathy with nature. They were the words of one who loved nature, and we, as all children do, loved nature. And then there were touches

of domestic life—the visit of the neighbour in search of bread after the family had retired to rest; the two sons, one so suave, and the other so snarly, but with the better heart; and the two brothers, the one a prodigal—portraits we perhaps could recognise. We read, and we felt that He who spake these things must understand us, since we did not find it very hard to understand Him.

All His words were simple, clear, and direct. There was no attempt to dazzle the mind with rhetorical display: there was no vagueness, and though the same phrases sometimes recurred, there was no monotonous sameness to lull the heart and conscience into what Isaac Taylor called a "theological torpor;" for His words were to the purpose: no time was wasted or energy frittered away on curious but profitless questions. To the purpose, that is, not of merely producing a well-ordered and logically balanced discourse, but to the purpose for which He spoke—for the quickening and rousing the moral and religious sensibilities of His hearers; to waken them to higher and completer confi-

dence in God (*Matt.* vi. 32); to give them a nobler idea of their own nature (*Matt.* vi. 26); to fill them with a profounder sense of their own sin (*Matt.* v. 17, 18); to

> "Constrain the anguished worlds from sin and grief,
> Pierce them with conscience, purge them with redress,
> And give them peace which is no counterfeit."

This purpose is seen in the determined way in which our Lord sought to reach the consciences of men. He knew what was in man, and He knew how readily the intellect will come to the succour of the conscience by seizing upon some interesting or incidental point, and thus turn aside the edge of some words that have come dangerously near the conscience. An illustration of this is found in the case of the Samaritan woman. At a certain point in her conversation she makes an effort to divert the current of thought from a too practical form. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," is the attempt, I think, to raise a disputed question, and thus avoid this home-thrust, "Thou hast had five husbands,

and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." But our Lord will not be diverted: He brings back the question to the heart and conscience: "The true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

This persistency of purpose displays itself constantly. His aim is to reach the conscience, therefore He replies to the malignant question of the Pharisees, "He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her." In the same spirit He answered the impetuous demand, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," "Man, who made me a ruler or a judge? Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

He knew, too, that as there are dispositions which will fence with every direct appeal to the conscience, so there are natures which can only be reached through tenderness. He knew that many a person who has remained hard and unmoved under the most menacing reproofs, has given way at a word of love; and it is interesting to note that the only instance of what could be

called a conversion under Christ's preaching is one where a sinner's heart is touched and conscience pierced by words of love.

One of the shortest, and yet one of the completest, of Christ's discourses might be described as a sermon on the text, "Art thou he that should come?" It is contained in *Matt.* xi., and consists of four parts, followed by what we may term the application. In the first part is described the mission of John the Baptist (*ver.* 7–15); in the second (*ver.* 16–20), the inconsistent conduct of the people; in the third (*ver.* 20–25), the dark destiny which awaited those who obstinately rejected the appeals of power and love; in the fourth (*ver.* 25–28), the deep spiritual knowledge gained by those childlike hearts who received the gospel. Then follows the loving invitation to all who are weary and heavy-laden to come to the Meek One for rest (*ver.* 28–30).

To estimate the force of such a sermon, it is necessary to throw ourselves somewhat into the current thoughts of the time, and to estimate the public interest which the

mission of the Baptist had evoked. Men had mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ. Stern and lonely he had lived his life of hardness and self-denial. Streams of people of all classes—peasants, priests, soldiers, Pharisees, Sadducees—had thronged to hear him (*ver.* 7, 8): an earnest religious spirit had taken possession of many hearts. From the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven had suffered violence, and the violent had taken it by force. This spirit of religious earnestness was not displayed by the self-satisfied and socially respectable classes so much as by the outcasts, whose consciences had been pierced by his words (*ver.* 12). There were multitudes—the great bulk of the people—who were unmoved alike by the language of God, whether speaking sternly through the Baptist or gently through Jesus Christ,—men whose spirit was to turn to scorn every effort to regenerate society (*ver.* 21–24). What dark doom awaited such? Proud in their temporal advantages—rich, and needing nothing—their heart as fat as brawn, there would be a day of terrible awakening, when their root

should be proved as rottenness, and their blossom go up as dust. But the preaching had not been all in vain (*ver.* 25). A change comes over the tone of our Lord: the woe has ended: He pauses: the thought of the lowly, simple, and perhaps despised and self-despising ones, who had found spiritual joy, comes across His mind: His face is turned upwards in prayer—"I thank thee, O Father, . . . that thou hast revealed these things to babes." Then, for some weary and humble ones may be listening, He breaks into the appeal to such, "Come unto me, all that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

This sermon reached the conscience and touched the heart of one at least. A woman was standing among the crowd of hearers that day. She heard of the kingdom of heaven, of the violent who were pressing into it—might not she? Yet what power had she, enervated by long-continued sin, to force her way through its strong and stainless doors? She was too weary. She must sit with her burden at the threshold of the kingdom, and watch with envy those strong ones who broke through all, and entered into

bliss. Too weary to force the gate of heaven; but heaven is not shut to the weary or heavy-laden; for this Preacher says, "Come unto me, all that are weary." And she came: the love of that invitation broke her heart, and gave her the courage of a holy violence, which forced its way into the Pharisee's house, till she stood weeping at the Saviour's feet (*Luke* vii. 24–37).

Christ knew what was in man. He knew that love alone could find its way to some consciences. More mighty than the repellent looks, the proud scorn, or the stern denunciation of the scribe or chief priests, were those simple words which told a tired heart and a long-stained conscience that there was a rest and a welcome for the most fallen.

He knew what was in man; but this knowledge never led to any over-anxiety to justify His words to those who were too heart-sodden to receive them. He taught them without seeking to enforce His utterances by reference to the authority of learned doctors or reverenced rabbis. The authority of truth was with Him. There was no need of an apologetic tone. The truth stated would com-

mend itself to men's consciences. Wisdom would be justified of her children.

In one sense this manner of authority belonged to Him alone who was the wisdom of God.

But there is a lesson which it may afford to all teachers—the lesson of trust in the power of truth to do its own work. The weapon which the preacher wields is prepared by Him who understands the conflict. "There is," says a modern writer, "a certain trust in God's Word that truth shall do its work in the hearts of men, which every preacher needs to make him a man of power. It is an equable and joyous trust. It is a spirit of repose in the *destiny* of the instrument which God has chosen. Once possessed of it, and *by* it, a preacher feels that he can afford to preach truth truthfully." This spirit of repose is pre-eminently seen in the words and teaching of Jesus Christ. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone." "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" "He that is of God heareth God's words." It is confidence in the truth

which can give this spirit of repose; and it is precisely this confidence which is often wanting in teachers. Yet it should not be wanting. If what is preached is true, and the truth, then have we not reason to believe that it must accomplish its end? The gospel is fitted to the heart of man. There is a correlation between the Word of God and the spirit of man, just as there is between the works of God and the nature of man. This fitness has been recognised by various minds. "I believe this book to be God's book, because it is man's book," wrote one, who

> "Faced the spectres of the mind,
> And laid them."

To win this spirit of confidence one thing alone is needed. It is intensity of personal conviction of the truth. This is the secret of power; and it points the practical application, which the example of Christ so powerfully enforces, to give ourselves unto prayer, as well as the ministry of the word. "Rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

II.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

"*Natan Profeta e'l Metropolitano*
Chrisostomo." Dante, "Paradiso," xii. 136, 7.

II

HEAVENS! what women these Christians have!" exclaimed Libanius the Sophist, when he found his onslaught against Christianity thwarted and defeated by the fidelity and firmness of the Christian women of Antioch. It was a reluctant panegyric of the courageous devotedness and unwavering piety of womanhood which has proved a glory and benediction to the Church of Christ. The unfeigned faith of Eunice and the deep religiousness of Nonna will be always associated with the names of Timothy and Gregory Nazianzen; and the pious influence of mothers has given both the Greek and Latin Churches their most distinguished names. The pencil of Ary Scheffer has added fresh interest to the much-loved story of St. Augustine and Monica. The immortal fame of St. John Chrysostom is the noblest monument of the piety of Arethusa.

Left a widow at the early age of twenty, she consulted no less her own than her husband's[1] wishes in resolving to consecrate her life to the education and training of her infant son John. She was left in affluent circumstances, and was able to afford him the best advantages which Antioch could give; and Antioch then boasted one of the most distinguished teachers and orators of his age. But though anxious for his progress in general literature and philosophy under the instruction of Libanius, she was even more anxious to keep him "uncontaminated from the pollutions of the most turbulent and dissolute city of the empire."[2] Her efforts were rewarded.

A choice situation, noble edifices of rich and varied architecture, spacious gardens, broad streets flanked with colonnades, a genial climate, celebrated scientific institutions, contributed their diverse attractions

[1] "Les tendres recommandations de son mari, qu'elle perdit peu après la naissance de Chrysostome, et sa sollicitude pour l'éducation de son fils, auquel elle consacra sa vie l'engagèrent a rester veuve à l'âge de vingt ans."—*S. Jean Chrysostome.* Lille, 1852.

[2] "Saint Chrysostom: his Life and Times," by the Rev. W. R. W. Stephens. London, 1872.

and made Antioch a favourite residence. A tone of gaiety and worldliness pervaded the city; and the vices which follow in the wake of luxury and ambition becoming fashionable among the inhabitants, held out a seductive bait to the restless minds of novelty-loving youth. But the fresher and purer fountains of which John Chrysostom had tasted at home gave him a higher and nobler taste: he could not endure the atmosphere of intrigue and covetousness which spread round the business life of Antioch. He refused to drink the streams of worldly advancement when he found them impregnated with the spirit of rapacity and chicane. Accordingly, like other lofty-hearted followers of the Nazarene, we find him drawing back from the way of worldly promotion just at the time when his success and fame as a lawyer were beginning to open before him an upward path of brilliant and dazzling prospects. "Stolen by the Christians!" was the lament of his teacher, Libanius, who had formed a high estimate of his pupil's ability, and bright hopes for his future. The disregard of his worldly advan-

tage displayed by young Chrysostom was reckless folly in the eyes of the Pagan philosopher. But the turning aside of his talents into another channel has given to the world a larger profit from his gifts, and the Church of Christ has gained the powers which heathen skill had helped to form. "The Pagan Sophist," writes Mr. Stephens, in his attractive and justly appreciated "Life of St. Chrysostom," "helped to forge the weapons which were to be skilfully employed against the cause to which he was devoted."

In an open court in the city of Antioch stood an octangular edifice. Its lofty dome rose high above the neighbouring houses. It was the great Christian Church. Within were tokens that the Christian faith was no longer the faith of the "not many noble," for signs of wealth were to be seen in the richly-gilt pillars and the sculptures which adorned the spacious marble pavement. Of the 200,000 inhabitants, about one half were Christian, and many of them belonged to the wealthy and influential classes. It was about the year 386 when John Chrysostom first

rose to address the congregation which assembled in that stately structure. He was then a man in the prime of life, but he might have passed for an older man, for his ample forehead was wrinkled, his head bald, his cheek hollow, his eyes deep sunken, and his frame attenuated with the severities and hardships of the monastic life which he had followed during the past six years. He had fled into seclusion, fearing the temptations of vainglory which he felt to be "a rock more fatal than the Syrens;" and now he stands in the busy world again, full of diffidence, knowing that the preacher must not only make his sermon as a wreath of the "pure flowers" of the gospel, but must do so with "clean hands." It was well that one who was to receive, during nearly twenty years, the attentive admiration of the wealthiest and most cultured cities of the world, should commence his career with a deep consciousness of his own infirmities, his susceptibility to praise and blame, and with the conviction that "in the spiritual conflict a man must always have his harness on his back, or he

spirit of one who reverences the Word too well to adopt any mere ingenious interpretation, and who only seeks to make its real meaning plain. But it is no barren exposition. His speech is lighted up with illustration and figure, and sprinkled with pungent allusions to the fashions of society around him. Now he will denounce the frivolous vanity of the young men, who are so anxious about their silken shoe-strings and so heedless of eternal realities. Now he will gibbet with remorseless sarcasm the worldly-spirited cleric, "who ought to have renounced all worldly calls, but who is to be seen at the silversmith's inquiring if his lady's mirror was ready, her casket finished, her flask returned; who hurries from the silversmith's to the perfumer's to see about her scents, from the perfumer's to the linendraper's, and so on upon a round of shopping."[1]

"His homilies were like a vast picture gallery — there was not a vice, not a bad habit, not a prejudice, of which he did not draw the portrait."[2]

[1] Stephens, p. 230. [2] Albert, p. 345.

"The man is proved by the hour,"[1] writes the Laureate. There came an hour which was to prove the resources, the fidelity, the genius of Chrysostom. A new tax roused the resentment of the inhabitants of Antioch. Something like revolt was threatened, and the city fell under the Emperor's displeasure; the removal of its rights and privileges seemed imminent: it was placed under a ban: a deputation was despatched to deprecate the Emperor's displeasure; and for weeks the inhabitants remained in suspense. It was the season of Lent. The ban had closed all the places of amusement, and the only places of public resort which remained open to the disconsolate and terrified inhabitants were the Christian churches. It was a splendid opportunity: crowds of godless, worldly, and heathen men thronged day after day into the great church; some out of curiosity to hear the famous orator of the Christians, some longing for a more stable hope now that their earthly prosperity was threatened; all eager and apprehensive. Then the marvellous

[1] "Queen Mary."

resources of the preacher were proved. Day after day he instructed and delighted the crowds, as he enlarged on the foundation truths of religion. The fertility of his mind seemed inexhaustible, as he discoursed upon creation, providence, &c., with clear and cogent reasoning, felicitous statement, rich, varied, and appropriate illustrations. The multitudes heard, they applauded, they wept, they beat their breasts, they cried to heaven, as that tongue, "fluent as the cataracts of the Nile," poured forth solemn warning, fierce invective, earnest expostulation, and affectionate entreaty. For twenty-two days these homilies on the statues, as they are called, were delivered, till, with the close of the Lenten season, there came from the capital good news of the Emperor's clemency, and Christian and Pagan could rejoice together on that Easter Day in the new life given to the city. It was hardly to be wondered at that when the see of Constantinople fell vacant through the death of Nectarius, and Eutropius selected Chrysostom for the place, the appointment gave satisfaction to all but

those whose ambition was disappointed or whose self-esteem was wounded by the choice.

To pass from Antioch to Constantinople was to pass from one wealthy and luxury-loving city to another; but it was also to pass into the more immediate atmosphere of courtly intrigue. "The palace of Constantinople rivalled and perhaps excelled the magnificence of Persia; and the eloquent sermons of St. Chrysostom celebrate while they condemn the pompous luxury of the reign of Arcadius." [1] But neither the dazzling splendour could seduce, nor the capricious power of the Court of Arcadius intimidate Chrysostom. As at Antioch, so at Constantinople, he denounced the selfishness, the luxury, the frivolity of the age; and if his boldness offended, his eloquence attracted the rich and powerful. But though thus bold in inveighing against the heartless and self-indulgent manners of the great, he was tender and charitable towards the fallen. The disgrace of Eutropius afforded an opportunity of displaying alike the Christian courage and the oratorical powers of the new

[1] Gibbon, vol iii. p. 168. (Milman's ed. 1846.)

archbishop. For a length of time Eutropius had exercised almost imperial sway. The Emperor had been "little more than a magnificently dressed puppet." Exerting undue influence, and straining his legitimate power, the minister had treated law and custom with disdain, and by insolence, extravagance, and extortion roused the hatred and contempt of the Empire. A revolt in the provinces, and the arts of the Empress, whom he neglected or scorned to conciliate, led to his disgrace. In the hour of his distress the only asylum open to him was the very church which he had sought to oppress. There the fallen man was received and sheltered by Chrysostom. Soon the fall of Eutropius, and the place of his retreat, became known. A mixed multitude of citizens and soldiers rushed towards the cathedral, eager to drag forth to punishment the tyrant whom they loathed. It was a critical moment. Chrysostom flung himself between the maddened multitude and their victim. He ascended the "ambo," confronted the crowd, and broke forth into a strain of eloquence which startled, arrested, and subdued them.

"If ever I might cry 'Vanity of vanities,'" he commenced, "it is to-day. Whither, whither have vanished the pomp of the consul—his badges of honour and his robes of state? All are gone. A mighty wind has blown, and the once proud tree, torn up by the roots, lies stript of its leaves, with dry and naked branches flung to the ground. Where is now the crowd of false friends? Where the feasts enlivened with joy and the unnumbered throng of parasites? Where the choice wines which flowed so abundantly, and the accompaniments of a *recherché* table? All have gone as a dream of the night flies before the dawn—as the flowers of the spring wither after a morning's growth. Never more let us cease uttering these words of the Holy Spirit, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' Let them be inscribed everywhere—on the walls and doors of our houses, on our apparel; above all, let them be deep graven in our hearts; let us meditate on them continually. Since all things are a vain and deceitful show, let us daily, in our meetings, at our meals, abroad and at home, repeat and give heed to these words, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'"

The consul was rescued from the mob. It was the crowning triumph of the orator's power. But genius however rare, and self-denial however exemplary, cannot protect even the most respected from the combined efforts of feminine resentment and irritated indulgence and professional envy. The fall of Chrysostom was settled when, to the anger of the clergy, whom he sought to reform, was added the vindictiveness of the bishops whom he had deposed, and the hatred of the Empress, the adoration of whose statue he had vigorously denounced. Intrigue, revenge, and pique carried the day, and John Chrysostom, twice banished, died an exile on the confines of the Black Sea.

"Death, far from closing his lips, has made him the preacher of the world."[1] If the language seems too much that of panegyric, we must remember that two of the greatest of French preachers almost repeat the eulogium. Bossuet described him as "the greatest preacher whom the Church had ever seen."

[1] Pope Celestine. Cf. Milman's "Latin Christianity," vol. i. p. 117.

Bourdaloue spoke of him as "the model of preachers." What powers combined to establish this reputation? It is not in exactness of style, or highly finished work, the studied speech of the rhetorician; it is the earnestness, the clearness, the strong common sense, the vehemence, the reverence, the reality of the orator that attracts us. "In fact, Chrysostom is a painter, and a painter of rare ability. He feels intensely: he sees things, he shows them, and this is enough for him. There is little defining with him: definitions are dry and cold; they do not suit luxurious amplification or abundant colouring of style; they only suit with preciseness."[1] He set before himself the one great end of all speech—to convince, to persuade, and to influence his hearers for good. "He did not," says Fénélon, "study false ornaments. All his discourse tends to convince. He arranged everything with judgment, and showed himself well acquainted with the manners of men. He entered into their hearts, and rendered things familiarly plain to them."[2] "Always

[1] Prof. Albert, "S. Jean Chrysostome considéré comme orateur populaire." Paris, 1858. [2] Fénélon on Eloquence.

great, always imposing. St. Chrysostom is also always popular in style."[1]

"Drinking his inspiration from the fountain of the Scriptures,"[2] and "kindling his soul in the bosom of his Redeemer,"[3] he is "the orator of the law of love."[4] Thus inflamed with a consecrated enthusiasm, he heeds no danger and shrinks from no duty. Courageous to rebuke vice in high places, it was fitting that the great Florentine should assign him in Paradise a place next to the brave prophet who could confront the king with the fearless accusation, "Thou art the man." Like the apostle whom he loved and reverenced, no peril or power of fire or threatened hostility moved him. "Like him, he bore with a holy boldness the name of his Master, even before kings and peoples. False brethren swore his overthrow; another Areopagus trembled at his words; another Sanhedrim proscribed him."[5]

[1] "S. Jean Chrysostome." Life. [2] Stephens. [3] Cassianus.

[4] "Orateur et Thaumaturge de la loi d'amour, jamais elle ne fut plus belle que sur ses lèvres, si puissante que dans sa vie."—*S. Jean Chrysostome: son Exil et son Retour.* E. Martin, l'Abbé d'Agde, vol. iii. p. 300. Montpellier, 1862.

[5] Abbé Martin, vol. iii. p. 386.

III.

ST. BASIL was placed on the border of two worlds. The one was fast passing away, the other just breaking into view. The old world was rapidly breaking up. The energy and the power of Julian were exerted to their utmost to arrest the decay of Paganism, which was fast spreading in every part of the Empire. For a moment the votaries of the ancient worship indulged in an ecstasy of hope as they saw "the grateful prospect of flaming altars, bleeding victims, the smoke of incense, and a solemn train of priests and prophets, without fear and without danger."

"But the genius and power of Julian were unequal to the enterprise of restoring a religion which was destitute of theological principles, of moral precepts, and of ecclesiastical discipline; which rapidly hastened to

decay and dissolution, and was not susceptible of any solid or consistent reformation."[1]

In such an age of change the lot of St. Basil was cast.

He was born at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in the year 329. The resentment of a dying heathenism breaking forth in persecution compelled his parents to flee for safety into Pontus, a region where in later years Basil himself found a solace, in comparative solitude, from the bickerings and the jealousies of men. His father, after whom he was named, is described as a man who to eminent virtues added the ornaments of erudition and eloquence.[2] His mother was a woman of piety; and his grandmother, an admirer of Gregory Thaumaturgus, took a pleasure in instilling into the mind of her grandson the teaching of her favourite.

"No really great man," writes Dean Hook, in his biography of St. Basil, "certainly no good man, can exist, unless the heart has been cultivated as well as the intellect."

[1] Gibbon, chap. xxiii. vol. ii. p. 298. Milman's ed.
[2] Migne Patrol. Curs. Tom. xxix. p. 7.

That the education of the heart was not neglected in the family of Basil the elder seems clear from the after-history of the family. Of the ten children, three sons, approved for their piety and learning, rose to the highest office in the Church, and all distinguished themselves[1] by their eminent holiness of character. Of these Basil had the advantage of being the eldest and most distinguished. In his early years he was remarkable for the grave dignity of his demeanour, a feature in his character which won the respect of his teacher Libanus, and secured for him immunity from the practical jokes which the university men at Athens played upon freshmen.[3] Among his fellow-students at Athens was Julian,[4] afterwards Emperor and Apostate. Here, too, was laid the foundation of that friendship with Gregory Nazianzen, which the ardent nature of Gregory so warmly cherished, but which the colder temperament of Basil so

[1] Moroni, Diz. Eccles. vol. i. p. 192.

[2] Richard et Giraud, Bibliothèque Sacrée, tom. iv. pp. 141, 142.

[3] Robertson's Church Hist. vol. i. p. 257.

[4] Milner, vol. ii. p. 85; Mosheim, vol. i. p. 324.

[illegible] years. "The [illegible] is. The same table [illegible] is. We were familiar with only [illegible] the church, the other, [illegible] in the schools, [illegible] our masters in the [illegible] Sermons, diversions, banquets, [illegible] those who were unfortunate [illegible] pleasure in them. The sole [illegible] of our existence is most glorious [illegible] was to be called [illegible] and to be such."[1]

As his university career closed, Basil had the misfortune to lose his father, and thus on the threshold of life he was deprived of his best counsellor. Like St. Chrysostom, he commenced life as a lawyer, and met with considerable success. His natural talents, his ready fund of learning, his skilled eloquence, won a large practice. Applause quickly kindled vanity, and the subtle threads of the world-web were fast weaving round his spirit. The heart once so earnest to be

[1] Gregory Nazianzen, Funeral Oration over St. Basil, Orat. xliii.

known only as a Christian sank into a slumber. One among his family noted the change with grief. His sister, who bore the name of her grandmother, Macrina, exerted her influence to dissolve the spell, and she was rewarded. "At length," in the language of Basil,[1] "I was roused as from a deep sleep. I gazed upon the marvellous light of gospel truth, and discerned the unprofitableness of the wisdom taught by the perishing authorities of this world."

Under the influence of these feelings he sought a retreat from the world, and turned monk. We may scorn the monastic spirit as having something pusillanimous and idle in it, but it is well to call to mind the witness of one by no means an admirer of monachism: "The flower of the flock of Christ in those days is to be found among (them) the monks."[2] In this retirement, tempered as it was by works of practical industry,[3] Basil discovered that which all who hearken to the insinuating cry, "Ecce in deserto," must dis-

[1] Epp. 233. [2] Milner, vol. ii. p. 86.
[3] Robertson, vol. i. p. 257; Milman, vol. iii. p. 195.

over that "the man of the world"[1] still lived in him, and that as long as we "carry about with us the germs of the maladies that torment us, the place makes no difference."[2] The days of quiet were not without their advantage in aiding to calm and subdue the passions, and in inducing a habit of sacred meditation.[3]

But the candle is not lighted to be hidden. There was work for Basil to do among men. He accordingly left Pontus, and entered into Cappadocia.

Cappadocia is a kind of table-land country, broken by mountains and famous for its corn-fields and pasture lands. In the midst of these, and close to the sloping sides of Mount Argæus, the loftiest peak in Asia Minor, was situated the flourishing city of Cæsarea. Its estimated population at that time was 400,000. This was the scene of St. Basil's labours. Here for years, in spite of opposition, jealousy, and persecution, he taught and wrought for the people. Once

[1] Epp. to Amphilochus. [2] Epp. to Gregory Naz.
[3] Ibid.

indeed he retired from the city to his retreat in Pontus, rather than be the cause of division by provoking the jealousy of Eusebius, the then Bishop of Cæsarea; but with this exception the remainder of his years, till his death in 379, was spent in Cæsarea. Soon the fame of his abilities drew large crowds to hear him. A fine scholar and an elegant speaker, the educated classes listened to him with delight; but not only were his auditors the *élite* of Cæsarea: there was a simplicity, or at least a perspicuousness, in his style which captivated the most ignorant. At the leisure midday hour, artisans, labourers, silk spinners, would crowd into church to listen to the discourse, which Basil wisely shortened, not to keep such too long from their work. While they listened, he would assume almost every style which could arrest, impress, rouse, penetrate, or subdue. Now he rises to almost tragic grandeur, now he holds up some grasping knave[1] to contempt with the vigour of an Aristophanes, or sketches the characters of others with the keenness of a

[1] Migne Patrol. Tom. ii. p. 45.

Theophrastus. Then he dilates upon the self-deception practised by those who are niggardly towards God and His work. "Some excuse themselves from giving on the plea that they have children. Did you desire children that you might use them as a pretext for your avarice, or make them a cause of your condemnation? Others spend upon display. They will give a large sum of money for a horse, but none for the kingdom of heaven. What answer will you make in the last day to your Judge—you who robe your walls with magnificence, and grudge a garment to the poor—you who decorate your horses with gorgeous trappings, and leave your brother covered with rags?"

But his discourses were not confined to any one set of subjects. If he enlarges to-day upon the prevalent vices of Cæsarean society, and the thin veneering of religion with which some Christians satisfied themselves, he will handle the loftier themes of Divinity with as easy a grasp to-morrow. Among the most famous of these last are the nine homilies on the six days of creation.

These discourses, known as the "Hexæmeron," were the delight of many in his own age—the educated and the uneducated alike acknowledged their charm. "The simplest could comprehend them, while the wisest admired them." This work has an interest for us over and above the interest which it derives from its author. "This book,"[1] writes the Abbé Cruice, "is still the most complete exposition of the state of the sciences in the fourth century, and one of the most faithful specimens of that golden age of Christian eloquence." In information, indeed, there was little original. He but eloquently repeated the teachings of Aristotle;[2] and as Tasso said of Guarini's Pastor Fido, "If he had not seen the 'Aminta,' he would not have excelled it," so it might be said of Basil, if he had not read the Greek philosopher, he had not written the "Hexæmeron." But this forms little drawback to his praise. Men are not usually gifted with the twofold power of deep and subtle thinking, and also of clear

[1] St. Basil, Abbé Cruice.

[2] Cruice, cf. "It is in the development of his subject that his amazing resources are seen." Leon Roux. p. 27.

and eloquent speech. All the teacher can do, and all that he should be expected to do, is to teach clearly and with honest conviction what he has made his own by patient study of the labours of others. All that should be looked for from the orator is that happy art of arranging arguments, illustrations, appeals, drawn from every source, so as best to persuade the hearts and minds of men, to awaken their interest, and to enlist their sympathy. To have done this in his work on the creation is the true praise of Basil. In his treatment religion appeared not arrogantly scorning the other gifts of God, but using them to the praise of the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Genius, learning, literary culture, philosophy, scientific research, are, in the hands of Basil, not the adversaries, but the handmaids, of theology. Such a method, while it proved to the philosophical Pagan that the leaders of the Church, far from opposing the progress of science, "cultivated it with all suitable diligence,"[1] elevated and enlightened the pious among

[1] Cruice, p. 117.

the Christians. "When," said Gregory Nazianzen, "I peruse his 'Hexæmeron,' I feel inspired, regenerated, transformed. I feel as if I were conversing with my Creator, and hearing from His lips the history of the universe."[1]

On the death of Eusebius in 370, Basil was elevated to the episcopate. His popularity and influence were then at their zenith. All Cæsarea loudly proclaimed his eloquence. He had admirers who sought to imitate, not his virtues, but his personal characteristics and features — his pallid complexion, the shape of his beard, his stately walk; and as Harry Percy had those who imitated his rapid hurried speech,—

> "And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,
> Became the accents of the valiant;"[2]

so there were those at Cæsarea who sought to speak "low and tardily," with measured dignity of utterance, and with a pensive and reflective air, to seem like Basil.

His promotion made no change in his

[1] Greg. Naz. Orat. xliii. § 67.
[2] Henry IV. Part ii. Act ii. Sc. 3.

habits; for he still retained the customs and dress of a monk,[1] and like his great contemporary, St. Chrysostom, he lived in the greatest simplicity. "Only the poor knew that the revenue of his bishopric was considerable."[2] The Church enjoyed the care and conscientious vigour of his administration for only nine years. In the year 379 he died, and his funeral was among the most remarkable ever witnessed in Cæsarea. The people of all classes, the cultivated who admired his talents, the poor who had benefited by his charities, the Christian flock who had been edified by his ministrations, vied with each other in their tokens of regret and respect. The roofs, the windows, the porticoes were covered with eager but sorrowing spectators. The multitudes in the streets pressed forward to touch the bier as it was borne through the town. So immense was the concourse of the people, that several persons were crushed to death.[3]

At a later date his friend Gregory Nazianzen pronounced his funeral oration. "He

[1] Mosheim, vol. ii. p. 324. [2] Hook, Eccles. Biog.
[3] Greg. Naz. Orat. xlii.

has left a chasm in the world," said the orator, "and there is none to fill it. Where shall we wander, or how employ the vacant hours? Shall we bend our steps to the Forum? Ah, no! it was there that Basil smiled upon his people. Shall we return to the Church? Ah, no! it was there that he fed us with the bread of life. Each converted sinner is his historian; each sheltered outcast is his biographer."[1]

Much difference of opinion has prevailed respecting his true position as an orator. While some[2] have claimed for him a style which, adorned with a rich colouring of imagination, never offends against the strict rules of good taste, others have described him as a cold rhetorician, who indulges in forced metaphors and a somewhat tawdry luxuriance of imagery.[3] The true measure of his powers may be best estimated by viewing in him the blending of the spirit of

[1] Boyd's Translation.

[2] Cruice, p. 111, cf. "The style of Basil did no discredit to his Athenian education. In purity and perspicuity he surpasses most of the heathen as well as the Christian writers of his age."—MILMAN, vol. iii. p. 110.

[3] Professor Fialon, St. Basil, p. 107.

Greece with that of the East. At Athens he drank in the genius of Homer, Demosthenes, and Plato; but there mingled with it the spirit of an Oriental. "An eastern sun[1] sheds its covering over the Attic style of the orator, and gives to it, as to the flowers of those burning climes, warmer tints and a more dazzling character. His mind, too, is steeped in Bible lore: hence he derives a picturesque phraseology, vivid images, and lofty poetry of thought." Hence, too, he derives that stedfastness of faith, that knowledge of human nature, and that practical wisdom, and the principles of that wide-hearted charity which made him "venerated[2] of the whole choir of antiquity, and applauded by the whole theatre of the learned." The fame of his piety and his ministrations won him the title of the Great. His learning, his fidelity, his liberality, his courage, and his earnestness in the faith combined to make him the great luminary of his province, the "Torch of Cappadocia."[3]

[1] Fialon, p. 100.
[2] Cave, quoted in Ffoulkes's Handbook. [3] Theodoret.

IV.

ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

"Bless'd Gregory, whose patriarchal height
Shed on the Eastern sphere celestial light."

Bishop Ken.

IV.

THE name of Gregory Nazianzen completes the distinguished trio which Greek ecclesiastical art has loved to group together as the eminent representatives of the Eastern Church. In oratorical ability he has usually been assigned the third place, as to St. John Chrysostom undoubtedly belongs the first; but there are few, I imagine, who do not feel that the personal character of St. Gregory wins much more upon their sympathy than the colder, graver, and less generous disposition of St. Basil; and if it be a nobler thing to love than to be loved, we must be better pleased with the chivalrous thoughtful affection tendered by Gregory to Basil than with the placid acceptance of it manifested by his friend. "The friendship of these two great

men," writes M. Villemain, "is known, and forms one part of their glory;" but the greater glory belongs to Gregory. It is in Gregory we see the constant recurrence to the remembrance of the happy days of their friendship; it is in Gregory we notice the anxiety to protect his friend from the petty annoyances of university life;[1] it is from Gregory we hear the language of tenderest retrospect and regret; and even in old age, when bitter experience has robbed the bloom of that early love, no slights or unkindnesses can destroy the ardour of his affection. "How can I think of this friendship without tears! . . . Envy was far from our hearts while they were filled with a generous emulation. There was a friendly contest between us—not who should carry off the first prize—but which should be allowed to adjudge it to the other, since each cherished the reputation of his friend as if it were his own. We seemed, in fact, to be only one soul animating two bodies."[2]

Like his friend Basil, Gregory was a native

[1] Fleury, vol. i. p. 542. [2] Orat. in Basil.

of Cappadocia. He was born at the small village of Arianzum, not far distant from the town of Nazianzum, from whence he derives the surname by which he is distinguished. His father had in early life been attached to a Judaizing sect, known as the Hypsistarians.[1] By the influence of his wife Nonna, he was brought to the acknowledgment of pure Christianity, and late in life he undertook the episcopal care of the Church at Nazianzum. The birth of their son Gregory they believed to be in answer to the earnest prayers of his mother.[2] When young Gregory was quite a child, his mother one day took him in her arms, and placed his little hands upon the Holy Scriptures; and after telling him how Abraham had been willing to offer up the son of his old age, she said, "Now I offer you, my child, as a living gift to God, as I have promised." Thus was he dedicated in his earliest years to God; and to this incident he made a very touching

[1] On this sect see Appendix (No. II.) at the end of Ullmann's "Gregory of Nazianzum."

[2] See Poem. De vitâ suâ Migne's Patrol. Cursus Greg. Naz. vol. iii. p. 1030.

allusion when he was delivering the funeral oration over his father. The discourse was as much designed to comfort his mother, who was present, as to eulogise his father. Frequently the speaker addressed her personally, and sought to calm and console her. He doubted, he said, whether this separation, which delivers us from present evils and ushers us into the joys of the life celestial, ought to bear the name of death. There was but one real death—sin, which was the ruin of the soul. Then he passes to a more tender strain; he speaks to his mother: "Does the separation pain you? Let hope gladden you. Is widowhood a heavy calamity? It is no calamity to him (who is gone). . . . Do you need one to care for you? Where then is he, your Isaac, whom he has left behind to take the place of all?"[1]

Under influences of affection and religion the early life of Gregory was passed till he left home to complete his studies. He visited and studied at Cæsarea in Palestine,

[1] Orat. Fun. in Patrem, Migne, do. vol. i. p. 1042.

Alexandria, and, finally, at Athens. On the way to this last place the ship in which he sailed was overtaken by a tempest, and about the same time the water-supply on board failed; and some days were passed in the double danger of thirst and storm. To the impression made on his mind at this time he attributed his most decided religious convictions. Escaped from the peril of the sea, he hastened to Athens—"Athens, a city dear to my remembrance, beneficent to the whole world, and, above all, to me; for she it was who gave me the boon of really knowing this man (Basil) hitherto hardly known to me. I sought for knowledge: she gave me happiness."[1]

The spot was a seductive one. "Athens was, at the time when Gregory reached it, still the most attractive seat of Heathenism in Greece.[2] Nowhere else had it so many friends, so many weighty and influential panegyrists; but against these seductive influences the young friends stood firm. It was even then their greatest glory to be and to

[1] Orat. in Basil. [2] Ullmann, Greg. Naz. p. 33.

be called Christians."[1] Gregory remained at Athens till he was thirty years of age, and even then he found it difficult to tear himself away from a spot so attractive, from a life so suited to his tastes and disposition, and from a friend so loved as Basil. "There is nothing," he says, alluding to his departure from Athens—"there is nothing more cruel and more sad than for friends brought up together at Athens to part from one another, and from Athens."

On his return home, well versed in liberal studies, and skilled in the subtleties of religious controversies, he repaid the home care bestowed on him by enlightening his father's simpler and less cultivated mind concerning some Arian sophistries by which his parent had been entangled.

Like Chrysostom and Basil, he spent some time in retirement and solitude, and like them he was a strenuous advocate of the monachism which he had practised.

In the year 370 his friend Basil was raised to the episcopate of Cæsarea, and became the

[1] Orat. in Basil.

patron of the fifty bishoprics of his wide-reaching province. Among them was "a wretched little town, dry and dusty, and continually distracted by the brawls of carters, travellers, and revenue officers."[1] This miserable town, or rather village, as Gibbon calls it, by name Sasima, was the spot where Basil proposed to Gregory to commence his episcopal labours. The sensitive mind of Gregory could not help regarding the proposition as a slight, and gave utterance to his vexation in a letter to his friend and patron, which forms one of the many charges of pride and superciliousness against Basil. It was not without secret satisfaction that Gregory found it impossible, owing to political and other events, to take charge of the post to which he felt so much repugnance; and it was certainly with more alacrity that he prepared to become coadjutor to his father at Nazianzum. There he continued labouring till his forty-ninth year, when circumstances summoned him to Constantinople.

[1] Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 446, edit. 1828; Robertson, vol. i. p. 259 (note).

For more than a generation the Arian party had wielded the direction of ecclesiastical matters in the Eastern metropolis. Now, however, there appeared some prospect of reorganising the orthodox. Gregory accordingly proceeded thither, and opened a small church, where a congregation was soon gathered. Not only were the orthodox party delighted to find a man who so boldly, so ably, and so lucidly proclaimed the true faith, but the Arian party, and even pagans, came to listen to one who clothed his thoughts in such an attractive eloquence. Well acquainted with the sacred Scriptures, he could reason forcibly and expound clearly, and his lively imagination contributed with his literary culture to give a charm and beauty to his sermons.

The fame of his teaching spread, and many began to resort to Constantinople for the sake of placing themselves under such a master. Among those who thus sought the advantage of studying the Holy Scriptures with him was one, himself afterwards famous in the history of Christian literature. St. Jerome,[1]

[1] S. Gregoire Naz. a Vie, &c. Lille, 1851.

satiated with his career of dissipation, and dreading the dangers which surrounded his spiritual life in Rome, found in Gregory a teacher whose temperament suited his own. Thus the little congregation at Constantinople continued to grow. Political events, too, began to smile upon the orthodox party; and at length, on the arrival of Theodosius, the Arians were driven from the city, and the churches restored into the hands of their opponents. Gregory was now anxious to leave Constantinople; but the Emperor, supported by the people, insisted on his being installed as Bishop of Constantinople, and he was solemnly acknowledged and approved as such by the council which met in that city in the year 381.

But his position was by no means a peaceful one. Jealousy and ambition on the part of some, envy on the part of others, served to inflame the disputes which ecclesiastical questions had raised; and Gregory, whose peaceful and poetic temperament longed for a life of quiet retirement, sought permission to resign the see. He felt that his presence

created division and stirred up national prejudices, and he was willing, as he himself said, to be flung, as Jonah, into the stormy waves, if thus he could still the tempestuous disputes of the Church. Having received permission from the Emperor to resign, he bade, in his last sermon, atouching farewell to the city and congregation where he had ministered with so much success and amid so much trouble. Naturally his thoughts dwell on the little church where he gathered the oppressed believers, and then on the great church, now restored to pure worship. "Farewell, my beloved Anastasia, thou who bearest so beloved a name! Thou raisedst up again our true faith, which at that time was still despised—thou field of our common victory—thou new Shiloh, where we first set up again our ark of the covenant, after it had been carried about during forty years' wandering in the wilderness! And thou, too, larger and more celebrated temple—our new possession, who hast now received thy true greatness from the true preaching of the everlasting Word of God! and all ye houses of God,

which come near to it in beauty, and distributed in different quarters of the city, connect the Christian family as by a holy chain—ye folds, which not we in our weakness, but God by His grace, working with us, hath filled with sheep which else had been lost."

This farewell sermon has been described as a masterpiece of eloquence. Certainly it produced a deep impression upon those who heard it and kept the preacher's name in affectionate remembrance.

From Constantinople Gregory retired to a life of "philosophical calmness and repose, where his affairs went softly without care or jar, and in which he could taste the joys and security of silence and tranquillity."[1] In his garden, with its murmuring fountain, or among the neighbouring woods, he found constant occupation, and if at times a fretful or regretful recollection of his past trials made him describe himself as an exile scorned and cast off by the world,[2] reading, prayer, and the composition of his poems, restored

[1] Nouvelle Biog. vol. xxi. p. 843.
[2] Moroni Diz. Eccles.

him to a happier frame, and gave a serenity and peace to his closing years.

He has been assigned a high rank among sacred orators. He has been described as the most pleasing[1] of the sacred orators of the fourth century, and the greatest after St. Chrysostom and St. Basil. This high position he is justly entitled to on account of "the fertility of his imagination—his fire and strength, his rapidity and compactness of thought, his heartiness and truth of feeling, and his occasional loftiness of flight."[2]

He had faults—a certain laboured elegance—"a false splendour, a straining after ingenious antithesis"—an overcrowded luxuriousness of images and comparisons, tedious and lengthy digressions upon trivial anecdotes. Some of these faults, it must be admitted, are faults rather of the age than of Gregory himself. The style of eloquence then cultivated was rather artificial than natural, and it was only to be expected that a man of susceptible temperament would largely reflect such faults,

[1] Nouvelle Biog. vol. xxi. p. 843.
[2] Ullmann, St. Gregory of Nazianzum.

and thus appear to a more discriminating and nature-loving age rather as a brilliant and agreeable writer, full of polish and elegance, than as a great orator.[1] It required a character of stronger marked individuality and less self-consciousness than Gregory possessed to break through the fashions of such an era. A man earnest, strong-minded, confident of the truth, fearless, full of love, but free from any morbid sensibility—a Chrysostom—might succeed in working out a genial naturalness of style where a weaker character would fail. The three orators, in fact, reflect their several characters. In Chrysostom we have a man bold, penetrated with deep, real convictions, speaking out of the very fulness of his heart; in Basil, a more self-contained, severe disposition, calmly and seriously laying out his talents with the deliberate purpose of persuading his hearers; in Gregory, a man of warm and generous affections, but less marked individuality, struggling between the influences of those severe models which were his ideals and the urgency of a nature impul-

[1] M. Villemain, Essai sur l'Oraison funèbre.

sive and loving. Chrysostom says what he feels; Basil says what he feels he ought to say; while Gregory is often trammelled by a certain distrust of himself. Of all men it is true that the character throws light upon the writings; of few men is it truer than of St. Gregory—"his life unknown, his writings are obscure."[1] Yet there are times when he seems to emancipate himself from these fetters: when, arguing with the unbeliever or the heterodox, a glow of happy naturalness suddenly pervades his style; he will parody[2] the arguments of his adversaries, adopt their own method, and turning the tables upon them, exhibit their inconsistencies with irresistible force, and set the whole audience laughing at their absurdities. At all times we feel the respect which is due to a frank and sympathising heart striving to win love and to raise penitence into hope. We may regret those rhetorical extravagances which more prosaic men have appealed to as though they were arguments; but we cannot refuse

[1] Prof. Grenier, La Vie et les Poésies de Saint Grégorie de Naz.

[2] Ibid.

our admiration and our affection to one so tried, yet so true; so misconstrued, yet so open-hearted; so slighted, yet so constant; so tempted, yet so firm in faith as Gregory the divine.[1]

[1] Students would do well to read, as good specimens of Gregory's style, his oration on the death of Cæsarius, the funeral oration on his father, that on St. Basil, and his farewell oration at Constantinople. Perhaps the first of these is the best: it is less overlaid with digressions, and has some passages of real power, especially towards the close, where he consoles the mourners, dwells on the vanity of life, and then, by a very happy change, carries his audience forward to the day when they shall see Cæsarius no longer exiled and tempted, but triumphant, glorious, and crowned.

V.

ST. AMBROSE.

" Tanto vogl' io che vi sia manifesto,
Pur che mia coscienza non mi garra,
Chè alla fortuna, come vuol, son presto."

Inferno, xv. 91 93.

V.

ONE summer's day a child lay sleeping in his cradle out of doors. The air was balmy, fragrant with flowers, and vocal with the hum of insect life. Suddenly a swarm of bees swept downwards towards the sleeping child, and hovered over the gently parted lips. The servant started forward, in fear for her little charge, to drive away the unwelcome intruders; when a strong voice and hand detained her. The father of the child, a man holding high official position in the Roman world, had noted the occurrence, and would not allow the swarm to be disturbed. He looked upon it as an omen of good. He remembered to have read that the same thing happened to Plato, "the most eloquent

writer of the ancients,"[1] and he read it in an augury of the eloquence of his son. Presently the bees flew away without injuring the child.

The child's name was Ambrose. His father died shortly afterwards, and his mother removed to Rome to superintend the education of her children. Here Ambrose had the advantage of studying Greek under the best teachers, and soon acquired some reputation in verse-making and eloquence.[2] His attainments and ripening years at length fitted him for his occupation in life; and, like many whose names afterwards became distinguished in the annals of the Church, he commenced his career at the bar.[3] His abilities quickly brought him into notice, and in his thirty-fourth year he received the appointment of Governor of Liguria and Æmilia, with consular dignity. He left Rome, A.D. 374, to enter upon his duties. "Go thy way," were the parting words of his friend and patron Anicius Probus, the Prætorian

[1] Fénélon. [2] Moroni, Dizion. Eccles.
[3] Robertson, vol. i. p. 267.

Prefect of Italy, "and govern more like a bishop than a judge." The wish was destined to be soon and strangely accomplished.

The appointment of Ambrose involved residence at Milan. Milan was then reckoned one of the four chief cities of Italy. Situated in the midst of a beautiful country and upon a fertile soil, it enjoyed, besides its natural advantages, some of those benefits which the caprice or the necessities of princes can bestow. Political motives or personal preference had induced some of the Emperors of the West to fix their ordinary residence at Milan. The presence of the Court fostered those appearances of luxury and splendour which had become the requisites of a debased civilisation. Circus, theatre, baths, quickly sprang up around the Imperial palace. Sculpture and architecture were patronised. In no city of the Empire were the fine arts so flourishing. The thousand-statued pile of Visconti was the work of ten centuries later; but the columns of porphyry, granite, and marble, which adorned the edifices of later ages, and which are still to be seen in some

churches of Milan, and in the Duomo of Monza, may afford some notion of the splendour of the buildings of an earlier period.[1] The wealth, the abundance, the rich traffic, and the populousness of the city won for it the name of "great;" but if the true greatness of cities is to be found in the integrity and piety of their citizens, we must accept the remark of Cave,[2] that in nothing was Milan greater than in having to boast of Ambrose as one of her ornaments.

The character of Ambrose was soon put to the test. The doctrinal disputes which disturbed the Church were severely felt in Milan, and had gained strength from the fostering care of Auxentius, who, though condemned for his Arian tendencies, still held the bishopric. His death and the necessity of choosing a successor were the occasions of tumultuous gatherings in the cathedral. Ambrose, in the discharge of his official

[1] "Se in alcuna citta d'Italia fiorirono in quel periodo le belle arti, questo fu certamente in Milano, dove Costanzo, Graziano i due Valentiniani et Teodosio stesso fecero lungo soggiorno."—Bossi, "Storia d'Italia," vol. xi. pp. 280, 281.

[2] Cave, "Lives of Fathers," p. 508; edit. 1716.

duties, endeavoured to quiet the excited throng, and exhorted them to peace and order. When he had finished speaking, a child's voice was heard crying, "Ambrose—bishop!" The cry was repeated twice, and the multitude adopted the idea, and insisted on nominating Ambrose. After vainly endeavouring to avoid the responsible office thrust upon him, Ambrose consented to receive baptism, and eight days afterwards he was consecrated bishop.

Mounted on the episcopal chair, Ambrose conducted himself as one dead to every claim of the world.[1] To render himself in every way fit for the office to which he had been so strangely called was his one aim. In vigour of character, sound everyday common sense, and general culture, he was already well adapted to the post; but he felt conscious of his deficiencies in theological knowledge. He accordingly set himself to work energetically to repair his defects by a careful

[1] "Montata la cattedra episcopale, Ambrogio si riputo siccome uomo morto a ciò tutto che sa de mondo."—MORONI.

study of the Scriptures and the writings of Origen. Not less by his zeal towards his flock and his liberality to the poor, than by his studiousness, did he show his sense of what his office required of him. To him the Christian Churches owed an elevation and improvement in church singing.[1] Nor were his many and conscientious labours unrewarded. Through his instrumentality the tide of Arian opinion began to shrink into narrow limits, till at length it was said that, except among the Gothic troops and the members of the Imperial household, there were no Arians to be found in Milan.

But his attention to these obvious duties of his post did not make him unmindful of those wider opportunities of usefulness which are sometimes thought too secular for the clergy. The interests of society and the cause of humanity found in him a warm, even if an imperious, ally. He deemed it no unfitting task for a Christian bishop to avert

[1] On the question of the place of St. Ambrose among musicians, see Nisard's "Monographie de S. Ambroise." Paris, 1866. Cf. also Gieseler, vol. i. pp. 293, 294.

invasion from the borders of the Empire, to confront tyranny, to preserve peace, and to rebuke barbarity and treachery. He parted with church plate to obtain funds for the ransom of prisoners from the Gothic invaders. He took a long and tedious journey to deprecate the advance of the tyrant Maximus into Italy.

While by these means his influence was growing in the West, his reputation as an orator and teacher was spreading to the far East. It is related[1] that two Persians of rank and influence, attracted by his fame, travelled to Milan to put his wisdom to the test. Whether we credit the story or not, its existence testifies the general esteem in which his abilities were held; and it is certain that his reputation as an orator excited in Augustine that curiosity which afterwards changed to interested attention, as he heard him set forth in pleasing language the inner meaning of Scripture. "I rejoiced," said St. Augustine, "when I heard Ambrose often say to

[1] Paulinus. See Cave, p. 608. Fleury. vol. ii. p. 114.

the people, 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'"[1]

By slow degrees, and the ripening of political events, the position of Ambrose became one of commanding importance. In his zeal for the cause of the Church he sometimes forgot that the exercise of power is not always a token of real strength. There are few of his most ardent admirers who would seek to vindicate his protection of the intolerant prelate and disorderly monks of Callinicum. More pleasing it is to dwell on his firm, faithful, and courageous conduct towards Theodosius after the massacre of the Thessalonians. The tyrant Maximus was dead, and the Imperial power was in the hands of Theodosius, according to Gibbon "the first of the Emperors baptized in the true faith of the Trinity."[2] The people of Thessalonica, excited by the stern justice dealt by Botheric, the lieutenant of the Emperor, to a dissolute but favourite charioteer of the circus, rose in

[1] Quoted in Hook's "Biographical Dictionary." The allusion, of course, is to the fondness for allegorical interpretations of Scripture which marked the preaching of S. Ambrose.

[2] "The Decline and Fall," vol. ii. p. 515.

fury, and murdered Botheric and some of his chief officers. On the report of the sedition the Emperor was assailed by opposite counsels. The bishops dwelt upon the virtues of clemency, but his minister Rufinus urged him to revenge. Oscillating between mercy and retribution, Theodosius appeared to adopt the episcopal advice while seeming also to fall in with the suggestions of Rufinus. An order for a merciless massacre of the inhabitants of the seditious city was issued. Almost as soon as issued the Emperor would fain have retracted it, but it was too late. The wretched people were treacherously invited to be present at games in the circus, and while assembled, an indiscriminate carnage commenced, which, after lasting three hours, ended in the slaughter of seven thousand.[1]

When the news reached Ambrose, he immediately exhibited his strong disapprobation of the crime of Theodosius by retiring from Milan to avoid his presence, and by writing to him a letter, in which he set forth the

[1] The number is estimated by some as high as fifteen thousand. See Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 545.

magnitude of his crime. Nor was he satisfied with testifying by word his sense of the Emperor's guilt; for when Theodosius presented himself at the church he was confronted on the threshold by St. Ambrose, who forbade him, a man defiled with the unatoned sin of murder, to enter the house of God; and when the conscience-stricken monarch pleaded the case of David, he was met by the courageous reply, "You have imitated David in his crime—imitate also his repentance." It is the most striking example of the power and ascendency of St. Ambrose that the Emperor submitted to an eight months' excommunication; at the close of which time he appeared at the church, humbly seeking the remission of the ecclesiastical censure and readmission to privileges, and exclaiming, in the language of the Psalmist, "My soul cleaveth to the dust."

Three years later the Emperor died, and before four years more his faithful reprover, exhausted by his labours, began to droop. It is said that before his sickness he foretold his death,[1] but added that he would live till

[1] See Ffoulkes' Manual, p. 140; Cave's Lives, p. 605.

Easter. He gently passed away as Easter-eve drew near, on the 4th of April, 397.

"His goodness," says M. Villemain, "is better established than his eloquence;" and it is certain that Augustine, who came to him more for critical than for religious purposes, found his discourses, if more truthful, yet less attractive, than those of the Manichæan Bishop Faustus.[1] The blemishes of his style may partly be traced to the circumstances of his life. Called late in life to change his civil occupation for an ecclesiastical one, he commenced the study of theology at an age when new subjects are seldom readily or fully assimilated by the mind. The bent of his thoughts had already become fixed, and what was read was rather retained than incorporated by the intellect. In consequence, an air of imitativeness is noticeable in his works. Strained thoughts and far-fetched expressions[2] are met with, and at times we are forcibly reminded of the saying of Dr. Johnson, "No man ever yet

[1] Fleury, vol. ii. p. 41.
[2] Villemain, "Essai sur l'Oraison funèbre," p. xliii.

was great by imitation.' Such a disposition to imitate is frequently a vice of students, and it is one which especially besets those who have not the command of great leisure. The pressure of work hurries them in their reading, and they are tempted to adopt some writer as their master instead of studying to master the writer. Soon the final results appear. The lion's skin will probably not fit, and the occasional bray discloses the ridiculous truth; and in any case the power of individuality—a sacred power, and one of God's best gifts—is so repressed, that all the buoyancy of naturalness disappears.

Notwithstanding this blemish, St. Ambrose has qualities which will enable his works to patient study. He is not deficient in warmth and imagination. 'He is not rude in diction[1] or conception; nor is he destitute of valuable thoughts.' His faults are many of them the faults of his age. 'St. Ambrose,' writes Fenelon, 'likewise fell into the fashionable defects of his time, and gives his discourse such ornaments as were then in vogue. Per-

[1] Mosheim, vol. i. p. 335.

haps these great men (who had higher views than the common rules of rhetoric) conformed themselves to the prevailing taste of the age they lived in, that they might the better insinuate the truths of religion upon people's minds by engaging them to hear the Word of God with pleasure. But notwithstanding the puns and quibbles that St. Ambrose sometimes uses, we see that he wrote to Theodosius with an inimitable force and persuasion." [1]

To this may be added the opinion of a more recent critic.[2] "The works on which he bestowed attention are polished, ingenious, adorned with flowers and imagery. In general his style is elevated, concise, sententious, and possessed of a sweetness which charms the reader."

When moved by genuine feeling he shook off the trammels, and allowed nature full scope and spoke forcibly and effectively. Witness the opening of his oration on the death of his brother Satyrus.[3] Too often,

[1] Fénélon on Eloquence, p. 169.
[2] "S. Ambroise, sa Vie et Extraits de ses Ecrits." Lille, 1852.
[3] Migné's Patrol. Cursus. S. Ambros. Op. tom. ii. p. 1290.

however, the fetters of the age were upon him. False notions of rhetoric and feebler conceptions of religious truth were in vogue, and Ambrose unsuspectingly yielded himself to the tendencies of that fashion of religion which he found prevailing.[1] These faults we must deplore; but while we regret the encouragement which he gave to unscriptural sentiments, and the impulse his example gave to the undue assertion of sacerdotal power, we cannot withhold our admiration for the author of the treatise "De officiis Ministrorum,"[2] and for one who throughout his life seems to have hearkened but to one voice—the voice of duty.[3]

The oration on the death of Satyrus is perhaps the best specimen of S. Ambrose's happiest style.[4] His discourse on Naboth[5] contains some good points. His remarks on

[1] Robertson, "Church History," vol. i. p. 268.

[2] Milner says of this treatise that it deserves to be made a part of an episcopal charge in every age of the Church.

[3] "Egli non ascoltera altra voce che quella el dovere."—MORONI, *Diz. Ecc.*

[4] Migne's Patrol. Curs. S. Ambros. tom. ii. p. 1290.

[5] Ibid. tom. i. p. 751.

the value and use of the Psalms [1] are worthy of perusal; and of his exposition of Psalm cxviii.[2] it has been said, "He surpasses himself in his exposition of Psalm cxviii.; it would be impossible to find anything more eloquent, more spiritual, and more pious." [3]

[1] Migne's Patrol. Curs. S. Ambros. tom. i. pp. 923, 924.
[2] Ibid. tom. i. p. 1198.
[3] Nisard, "Monographie de S. Ambroise," p. 13.

VI.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

"I held in truth with him who sings
To one clear harp of diverse tones
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to nobler things."

VI.

ONE day, fourteen hundred years ago, two persons sat at an open window, and looked out upon the gardens and busy streets of Ostia. The scene before them was full of life and beauty: the quays, the ships, and shore were in the foreground; beyond lay the blue sea, dotted with many a white sail in the offing. But their gaze was not directed to the gay and lively scene below, but upwards to the glowing sky, as though they sought to read there the glories of which they have been speaking. They have been speaking of the celestial city, its jewelled walls, its golden streets, and its eternal peace. They can speak of that peace as only those can in whose hearts has commenced the prelude of the heavenly melody.

The joy of it is even then within their spirits. The younger of the two is a man who has barely reached the middle arch of life; upon his face are written the traces of that wild conflict which he has fought in the gloomy wood of sin and error in which he has lost his way.

> "Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
> Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte
> Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura!
> Tanto è amara che poco è piu morte."

But now that fear is more than a little quieted, and a profound and holy calm reigns in his "heart's deep lake." His companion more than shares that calm joy; for if his joy is the joy of a heart forgiven, hers is akin to the joy which the angels in heaven feel when a sinner over whom they have long watched at length repents; for she is his mother, and now, after thirty-three years of watching and prayer, this her son, which was lost, is found, and is doubly hers in the flesh and in the Lord.

They are waiting at the port of Ostia for a ship to take them back to their native land; but it was a much longer voyage that the

mother was destined to take. The dearest and most earnestly coveted blessing of her life had now been given her in the conversion: her cup runs over; earth has no greater joy to give; her next joy will be in heaven. "You will bury me here," she said to her son, when, soon after their happy conversation, she was taken ill. Within ten days the summons came, and she parted for a fairer coast than any washed by the Mediterranean. Alone her orphaned son Augustine repaired to the scenes of his childhood, to find in a hundred spots reminiscences of the love and piety of his mother Monica.

The early years of St. Augustine had been spent in Africa. He was born at the small African town of Tagaste—now identified by some with the ruins known to the Arabs as Souk-Aras.[1] His father Patricius was a Pagan, and a man of irritable temper. His mother is known wherever Augustine's name

[1] "L'emplacement de Tagaste a été découvert au mois de Mai, 1844. Ses ruines que les Arabes désignent sous le nom de Souk-Aras sont celles de cette ville."—M. Poujoulat's "Études Africaines," quoted by M. l'Abbé Flottes, in "Étude sur Saint Augustin."

is held in honour. Besides eminent piety, she was gifted with practical common sense; she was an active housewife, and possessed a shrewd and ready humour.[1] At Madaura Augustine received some part of his education in Greek, Latin, grammar, and rhetoric; but he was wayward and idle, and was constantly meeting with punishment, which he greatly dreaded.[2] Notwithstanding his idleness he gave tokens of his abilities, so much so that his father determined to strain every nerve and send him to Carthage to study. At the cost of some self-denial and exertion Patricius was successful, and young Augustine, at the age of sixteen, entered Carthage.

Time and conquest had transformed the city of Hannibal into a Roman city. Upon the ruins of the earlier dominion, Rome had founded a new people.

The government, the law-courts, the amuse-

[1] See Robertson's "Church History," vol. i. p. 395, note.

[2] "Nam puer cœpi rogare te, auxilium et refugium meum; et in tam invocationem rumpebam nodos linguæ meæ; et rogabam te parvus, non parvo affectu, ne in schola vapularem."—"Confession," lib. i. cap. ix.; Migne's Patrol. Curs. S. Aug. op. vol. i. p. 667.

ments, the luxuries, were Roman. The town was one of splendour and importance. Trade and commerce were busy in her markets, upon her quays, and in her harbour. Her streets were rich in splendid temples and edifices adorned with gold and marble. Nor were arts and letters forgotten. Her schools were numerous and renowned, and in her theatres the choice dramas of Rome were represented with talent and spirit, and the half-Roman, half-African population listened in delight to the comedies of their countryman Terence.[1]

Such was the city to which Augustine was introduced at an age naturally susceptible and with a temperament ardent and impetuous. Soon the pleasures and temptations of the place carried him away; and in this life of indulgence he was not without the countenance of his father.[2] The influence of his mother's piety and early teaching was not, however, wholly lost. Even in the

[1] Villemain, "Tableau de l'Eloquence Chrétienne au iv. Siècle," p. 367.

[2] Fleury says he fell into evil habits, "par l'oisiveté et par la complaisance de son père." —Vol. ii. p. 40."

midst of his life of dissipation he strove to veil the religious dispositions of his mind; for "he sought to appear less religious than he was." "I made myself worse than I was, that I might not be dispraised."[1] Error as well as passion assailed him, and he fell into the confusions of Manichæism, and even Monica began to despair of his rescue. But five or six years wrought a change in mind, and he turned dissatisfied from the system of Manes to the teaching of Plato. Under this influence he published, at the age of twenty-six,[2] his first work, a treatise, "De Apto et Pulchro."

"Thou hast made us for Thyself; nor can we rest till we rest in Thee," was St. Augustine's exclamation and confession to God at a later date; and his own history is the best illustration of its truth. He could not rest satisfied: neither in pleasure nor in study;

[1] Hook, "Eccles. Biog." p. 379.

[2] It is only a coincidence, but it is worth noticing, that when about the same age Burke published his treatise on the "Sublime and Beautiful." In ready philosophy and passionate intensity the African saint and the English statesman might be compared with one another.

neither in the religion of the Persian nor in the philosophy of the Greek could a spirit so truly noble find repose. Restless and discontented he journeyed to Rome; and thence, having received an appointment, he repaired to Milan. Attracted by the fame of Ambrose, he went to hear him preach. "While I opened my heart," are Augustine's own words, "to admit 'how eloquently he spake,' there also entered, 'how truly he spake;' but this by degrees." Thus slowly truth broke upon his heart; and then, partly in agony of contrition, partly in steady conviction, the light stole upon his spirit. The morning came, and also the night. The shadows of Monica's life were lengthening towards its sundown just as the dawn of a better day broke upon Augustine.

Unlike the great Apostle of the Gentiles, whom he loved so well, Augustine seemed to receive a commission to tell among his own people what great things the Lord had done for him, and had mercy upon him. Accordingly Africa was the scene of his labours. First at Tagaste, and afterwards,

and disorders had crept in, and the sanctuary of God was for hours more like a low tavern than a house of prayer.[1] This custom St. Augustine set himself to reform. On the day of the festival he preached in the morning to the people, and set forth the inconveniences, the indecency, and the profanity of the custom. The audience listened, applauded, and were half persuaded. In the evening he again addressed them assembled in church. He poured forth all his heart before them; they heard, they were entranced, they wept, the gross indulgences seemed to lose their charm; the multitude remained to celebrate the feast with repentance and purer faith; and the church which formerly echoed the sound of riot and unseemly song, rang with the voice of prayer and praise.

Such was but one of his many useful works at Hippo; but if his lips poured forth instruction for the people of Hippo, his pen was conferring benefit upon a much larger audience. "His 'Confessions' had become at once the

[1] "La Génie Philosophique et Littéraire de S. Augustin." A. F. Théry, pp. 80, 81.

manual of passionate devotion and the history of the internal struggle of sin and grace in the soul of man."[1] He was now to console a desponding Church and a doubting world, by writing a Philosophy of History.[2] The Goths swept over Europe; Alaric captured Rome; misery and despair were everywhere; and from thousands of disappointed hearts there went up the lament that the religion of Jesus had failed, for that ever since the advent of Christianity the world had been growing worse. Then Augustine sat down and wrote "The City of God." "It was," writes M. Villemain, "the funeral oration of the Roman Empire pronounced in a cloister."[3] It was the voice of faith crying across the storm, "God is our refuge; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed: though the waters roar and be troubled, there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." The flood of invasion rolled onward; and nineteen years after Rome had

[1] Milman, "Latin Christianity," vol. i. p. 147.

[2] "Augustin écrivit la livre de la Cité de Dieu et créa ainsi la Philosophie de l'Histoire."—Abbé Flottes, pp. 122, 123.

[3] "Tableau de l'Éloquence Chrétienne," &c. p. 483.

been taken by the Goths, the Vandals introduced into Africa by Boniface were at the gates of Hippo; but while the sound of war was shaking rampart and wall, St. Augustine passed away to that kingdom which cannot be shaken, and to that city which hath eternal foundations, and whose builder and maker was God.

It was the year 430, when Augustine was seventy-six years of age.

In his preaching he sought to teach the truth, rather than to dazzle with fine verbiage or rhetorical flight. By the side of the eloquence of the Greek Fathers his preaching might seem tame; but it suited the minds of the Africans, who listened with delight, and were not unfrequently moved to tears.[1] But he did not undertake the work of preaching without study; much of his spare time he devoted to this work, and at first he seems to have learned his sermons by heart; later he left himself freer, and on occasions preached without preparation. Care and simplicity, linked with the earnest desire to win over

[1] "S. Augustin, sa Vie et Extraits de ses Ecrits," p. 182.

men to the truth, ensured his success.[1] Following his own rule, that a persuasive discourse must be simple and natural, he becomes "at once sublime and popular. He leads us to the highest notions by the most familiar terms of expression. . . . We see him sometimes condescend to the lowest and coarsest apprehensions of the people in order to reclaim them."[2] "The ages make him more eloquent and persuasive,"[3] wrote a French bishop of the seventeenth century; and it is in one sense true; for the genius of St. Augustine was not local and transitory, but abiding and universal. He is pronounced by an English historian to be "a teacher of wider and more lasting influence than any since the apostles."[4] An eminent foreign writer describes him as "the greatest figure of the ancient Western Church. No theological influence has equalled his. . . . Luther was his disciple; Saint Cyran and Pascal sheltered them-

[1] "S. Augustin ou l'Afrique au Cinquième Siècle." A. Biéchy.

[2] Fénélon, "Letter to the French Academy."

[3] Bishop Godeau, "La Vie de S. Augustin." Paris, 1652.

[4] Robertson, "Church History," vol. i. p. 395.

selves under his name:"[2] and, "after fourteen centuries, he reigns as a theologian and a philosopher, either in his own or in the name of others in the world of ideas."[3]

But not as theologian, nor as philosopher, nor as preacher, nor as writer on music, does he most attract us. The versatility of his genius may amaze us, but it is his personal character that attracts us. One of the greatest among the Reformers[4] saw in him, as in a mirror, the model of that bishop whose features were portrayed by St. Paul. The greatest preacher of the French Church[4] loved to linger over his writings; and an illustrious prelate[5] of our own time contemplates him as "one of those great spirits, the best, the noblest, the tenderest, the bravest, which humanity has produced, whose life is among the most beautiful witnesses of the Divine power of Christianity, the most splen-

[2] E. de Pressensé, "Le Christianisme aux Trois Premiers Siècles," Sermons Historiques donnés à Genève, 1858, vol. ii.

[3] M. Fouquet, quoted in "S. Augustin, sa Vie," &c. Lille.

[4] Erasmus. See "S. Augustin, sa Vie," &c. Lille.

[4] Bossuet.

[5] Mgr. Dupanloup, "Révue des Deux Mondes," July, 1851, p. 302, quoted in Flottes, p. 136.

did apology for piety." And no wonder; for it is the marvellous change which passed over him in the meridian of his days which most fascinates the student of human nature and rejoices the Christian believer. "This hath God wrought," is our exclamation, as we see the wayward lad, the dissolute, self-indulgent, proud-minded rhetorician transformed, devoting the masculine vigour of his mind and the womanly tenderness of his heart to the work of God with wisdom, tact, zeal, and love, setting himself against the little meannesses of social life, summoning Christians around him to a larger, loftier, and more definite charity; presenting them with the maxim, "Si vis amari, ama," and giving them in his own life a conspicuous example of its practice; winning from friend and foe, from his own age and from every age which has followed, in undisputed possession, and without the need of clerical fiction, the universally accorded title of *Saint* Augustine.

Of St. Augustine's works, the "Confessions" are so well known that they need

hardly be mentioned. M. de Pressensé points to "The City of God" as a work for the present day. Of his Sermons, that on the Healing of the Blind Man (John ix.) has been more than once printed as a specimen of his best style. The sermons numbered xcii. and xcvi. in the Benedictine edition are worthy of perusal. They may be found in Migne's "Patrol. Curs. S. Aug. Op." vol. v. p. 573 and p. 586; and they are translated in the Library of the Fathers. In his work "De Doct. Chr." may be found some useful remarks on Christian preaching. Cf. also "Ep. to Honoratius."

VII.

ST. JEROME.

"'Twas his to climb the tufted rocks and rove
The chequered twilight of the olive grove;
'Twas his to bend beneath the sacred gloom,
And wear with many a kiss Messiah's tomb."

VII.

THERE are few spots more attractive among the thousand attractions which cluster round the Eternal City than the deserted quarries which lie outside the walls. Her magnificent temples and her more splendid ruins speak to us of imperial greatness and pontifical splendour; but the Catacombs are the witnesses of a greatness more lasting than the Colosseum or St. Peter's can recall —of the greatness of high-souled devotion, unwearied fidelity, and the patience and faith of the saints.

In the fourth century there was one who loved on Sundays to wander among these corridors, adorned on all sides with tokens of Christian constancy and suffering. He was a young man of quick wit and ardent, even vehement, temperament, who entered with

keen pleasure into the studies of the schools and with no less intense satisfaction into the seductive gaieties of the capital. But the silent burial-ground of apostles and martyrs had a charm for him. It served to impress upon his mind, amid the fascinations and luxuries of the metropolis, the more earnest and real business of life. The darkness of the crypt, walled in on either side by the bodies of the dead, reminded him of that voiceless gloom which falls upon all the sparkling and unreal joys of earth. His own words, describing the scene, were: "Here and there the light admitted from above tempered the horror of this gloom; yet it was not the light of a window, but of a loophole, and again we groped our way onwards in the darkness which Virgil spoke of, 'Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent.'" He could not, amid the vortex of luxury and self-indulgence in which he was immersed, shake off those impressions of the seriousness of life which he had derived from his early training. His home had been in the rude little town of Stridon, in the province of Dalmatia, where

he had been born, and where his parents, who were wealthy Christians, still lived; but they had been anxious to give their son Jerome a better education than Stridon could offer, and they had sent him to Rome. His instructors, Donatus and Victorinus, were men of eminent ability. "In them he found the inspiration of two schools—in one a pure taste for profane poetry, in the other the traditions of ancient eloquence mingled with Christian fervour."[1] To their teaching he brought gifts of no mean order—a lively wit, an ardent temperament, a happy memory, and a ready and easy elocution. His progress was so rapid, and his success in eloquence so marked, that he was soon regarded as one ready to appear at the bar with distinction.[2] But the deepening sense of the vanity of all earthly things and the terror of the grave wrought a change. His powerful imagination was constantly awakened by the thought that the end of all these gaieties and luxuriousness was death. Stirred by these convictions, he

[1] "Nouvelle Biographie Générale."
[2] "S. Jérôme, Histoire de sa Vie." Lille.

resolved to fly from the city of temptation; and accordingly, having first been baptized, he set forth, in company with his friend Bonosus, to travel. He carried with him still his insatiable thirst for knowledge. Wherever he came, to Gaul or Britain, he sought instruction. In the course of his travels he halted at Trèves. Trèves was one of the great educational centres chosen by Rome. Schools had been established at Marseilles, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Autun, and Trèves. The foundation at Trèves was richly endowed, mainly owing to the liberal patronage of Gratian. Here a new direction was given to the thoughts and pursuits of Jerome. Hilary's commentary on the Psalms fell into his hands. His desire to gain more knowledge of theology was aroused. He visited Aquileia, and during his studies at that once famous monastery he formed friendships with Heliodorus, to whom some of his most touching epistles are addressed, and with Ruffinus, afterwards his most ardent opponent. In the quiet of this school of theology there dawned upon him the wish for a life of celibacy.

Deeply versed in Christian controversies, and profoundly sensible of the severity of the world's temptations and the subtle power of the human heart, overflowing with zeal, and enthusiastic in his admiration of the ascetic life, he returned to Rome. The atmosphere of the place only served to quicken his already vehement fondness for the monastic life by rousing his fear of the seductions of worldliness.

"The second half of the fourth century," writes M. Thierry, "was without doubt the most luxurious age of Rome and Italy."[1] Public spirit, which sought to adorn the city with monuments, had given way among the citizens to the more selfish love of decorating their private houses. Profusion of ornament took the place of beauty of form, and riches of majesty. The enervating influence of Oriental manners was felt. Rome was indeed the mistress of the world; but the East set the fashion: "She could still give the law,

[1] "Saint Jérôme, La Société Chrétienne à Rome et l'Emigration Romaine en Terre Sainte." Par M. Amédée Thierry, Senateur et Membre de l'Institut. Paris, 1867.

but Constantinople gave *la mode.*"[1] "The dress[2] of a lady of fashion was not of wool or linen, however fine; such vulgar materials were left to the plebeian classes. The lady only wore silk, often brocaded with gold, and of so fine a texture that, in the language of a Father of the Church, they covered without concealing the body. Jewels, pearls, precious stones, a girdle of gold, gold-embroidered shoes, completed the costume."[3]

Into a society thus abandoned to voluptuous and luxurious living Jerome entered, filled with the intense conviction of the need of utter separation from the world. Among such he began to exert his influence. "His fervid imagination and impassioned eloquence made a powerful impression on all who heard him, but more especially on the female portion of his auditors."[4] The applause which greeted him he felt to be a new temptation of the world; so once more he

[1] Thierry, tom i. p. 2. [2] Ibid. p. 13.

[3] "Caliga quoque ambulantis nigella ac nitens stridore ad se juvenes vocat."—Hieron. Ep. 117; Migne Patrol. Cursus, vol. i. p. 957.

[4] Hook, "Eccles. Biog." vol. ii. p. 284.

turned his back upon Rome, and after visiting, in company with his friends Innocent, Heliodorus, and Hylas, the monasteries in Thrace, Pontus, Galatia, and Cilicia, he retired into the desert of Chalcis, to avoid temptations and conflicts.[1] But his expectation proved a vain one. In the solitude he was tormented by the remembrance of Rome, and its society and its pleasures. There he found his thoughts and wishes continually turning. The pencil of Leonardo da Vinci has immortalised this scene of his life. "The solitary was roughly apparelled; long exposure had given to his skin the lines of an Ethiopian; his body was brought to the verge of the grave; but his passions were still raging; and he, who was perpetually

[1] I cannot forbear quoting the following remarks of the late lamented Dean of Chichester on the subject of the low standard of character aspired to in the monastic life:—"Such [the mere avoiding temptation] was the negative excellence which Christians, under the increasing influence of the monastic life, now began to content themselves with aspiring to, instead of active virtue, by which alone the evils to ourselves can be seen, combated, and removed, and the good strengthened and purified."—Hook, "Ecclesiastical Biographies," p. 287.

Of this active virtue Dr. Hook himself set a conspicuous example in his unwearied labours at Leeds.

the light of a recent correspondence, that under his auspices Fabiola founded, and endowed with her wealth, the first hospital in Rome, and herself attended the sick who were received into it. The celibate life became among certain people an object of admiration, and many ladies of rank and opulence were willing to follow Jerome when he left Rome for a life of exile in the Holy Land. "Paula, a daughter of the Scipios, and a descendant of the Gracchi, preferred Bethlehem to Rome, and exchanged the splendour of a palace for a hovel in Judea."

From his retreat in Bethlehem he beheld with grief the disasters of the Roman Empire. The Goths—Alaric and Ataulphus—swept like a flood over the civilised world. "From the one end of the world to the other," was his lament, "the Empire crumbles into dust, and only our pride survives." The doors of the monasteries of Bethlehem were open to the fugitives, and Jerome rejoiced to see the descendans of the noblest families of ancient Rome "crowding for consolation to the foot of Calvary."

his letters are orations; and his epistles of condolence are frequently funeral eulogies, inspired by the sense of a recent loss and full of a pathetic eloquence.[1] Witness the opening of his letter[2] to Heliodorus on the death of Nepotianus, who died in the prime of his manhood:

"Nepotian, mine, yours, ours, Christ's, and the more ours because Christ's, has left us, old men, wounded and cast down with intolerable grief. We thought him our heir, but we are called to his funeral. . . . . Formerly the son pronounced the eulogy of the father in the presence of his corpse. To-day (woe to us!) this order is reversed; and the last sad office which his youth should have paid to us, we, the aged, are constrained to render him."

Writing on less sombre themes, the keenness of his wit has more play. "His sketches of character may be compared with the choicest morsels of Theophrastus. When he

[1] Villemain, "Essai sur l'Oraison Funèbre," p. xlix.

[2] Ep. ad Heliod., Migne's Patrol. Curs. S. Hieron. Op. vol. i. Ep. lx.

assails the vices of his time he has the freshness of Juvenal.[1] The intensity of his own character reveals itself in all his writings. He disdains rules and method, and gives free rein to his genius. He has been compared to a warrior.[2] Warmth, courage, quickness, and *finesse* are his qualities. Lively, impetuous, attractive, he invests the driest topics with a certain interest. Imagery, ornament, learning, are at his command; and when his sympathies or prejudices are enlisted, he writes with the loftiness and warmth of eloquence.[3] Such features led Fénélon to rank him, notwithstanding his violation of system, above many who hold a high rank among orators. Two of his most recent biographers, one a Frenchman and the other a German, have compared him to the great Roman orator. The German[4] claims for him the title of the "Christian Cicero." The

[1] Thierry, tom. i. p. vii.

[2] "S. Jérôme, sa Vie," &c. Lille.

[3] Fénélon on Eloquence.

[4] "Man bezeichnet gewöhnlich Lactanz als den 'Christlichen Cicero' könnte aber diesen Namen mit fast noch grösserem Rechte dem Hieronymus beilegen."—"Hieronymus sein Leben und Werken." Dr. O. Zöchler. Gotha, 1865.

Frenchman regards him as a writer often equal to Cicero; and in a later passage seems to hint that the part played by Virgil in the Divine Comedy might more fittingly, in consequence of his vast theological knowledge, have been assigned to St. Jerome.[1] An Italian speaks of him as "the Hercules" of the Church, at whose translation to another world the firmament glowed with new brightness.[2] Passing from these eulogistic opinions, we may view him as a man of great gifts, vast erudition, and undoubted piety; and we can learn, in spite of the hastiness, bitterness, and arrogance which blemished his character, to admire his talents, to be grateful to him for his unwearied labours in Biblical knowledge, and to love him for his sincere attachment to our master, Christ.

It is not my province to speak of the value of St. Jerome's commentaries; but, among his epistles, those addressed to Heliodorus[3] and Nepotianus are worth perusal, though for

[1] Thierry, tom. i. p. iii. Ibid. tom. ii. p. 242.

[2] Sebastiano Bonadies, "Vita di S. Girolamo," p. 216.

[3] Migne's Patrol. Cursus S. Hieron. Op. vol. i. Ep. lx.

[illegible] reasons: the former as giving a [illegible] and notwithstanding its studied imi[illegible] of the famous consolatory letter of [illegible] to Gerontia, perhaps the best ex[illegible] of his pathetic eloquence: the latter is [illegible] though disfigured by the religious extravagances of his age, some valuable instructions to those who are young in the ministry. See especially the passage commencing "Divinas Scripturas sæpius lege," &c.[1]

[1] Hieron. Prol. Lib. 5. Hieron. Op. Ep. II. vol. i. p. 533.

VIII.

DR. JOHN TAULER, OF STRASBOURG.

" Ed io ne parlo
Sì come dell' agricola che Cristo '
Elesse all' orto suo per ajutarlo.'
Par. xii. 69.

VIII.

SIX hundred years ago the city of Strasbourg afforded special attractions to visitors. The cathedral tower, designed by Edwin of Steinbach, had just been completed, and its great height and delicate tracery and carvings were contemplated by thousands with just admiration. But not the stately temple only drew visitors to Strasbourg. There was a Dominican who preached there, and the fame of his eloquence and zeal had spread far and wide, and for many leagues round the people flocked to hear him. It was an age when earnest and heart-helping preaching was needed, for more than one shadow had fallen upon Christendom. The religious enthusiasm which had furnished expeditions to recover the Holy Sepulchre, and had served to draw European thought

and feeling into unity, had spent itself, and, in the language of Gibbon, a mournful and solitary silence prevailed along the coast which had so long resounded with the world's debate: but in its stead other voices were raised in discord, and the ominous names of Guelph and Ghibelline began to be heard. Quarrels about rights of investiture were frequent, and bishops often fought their way to their episcopal thrones, consecrated not by the prayers but by the blood of their flocks. Popes excommunicated emperors and emperors threatened popes; other evil voices were heard. Alchemists, wizards, and astrologers vied with Franciscan and Dominican in asserting their influences over the people, and simple folk whispered with bated breath of

> "A wizard of such dreaded fame,
> That when in Salamanca's cave,
> Him listed his magic wand to wave,
> The bells would ring in Notre Dame."

The influence of Abelard was still felt, and the legacy of discord which he bequeathed was bearing pernicious fruit, and controversies,

utterly unintelligible to the bulk of mankind, raged with fury in universities and schools. The voice of the "Dumb Ox of Sicily" had been answered by Duns Scotus; and Thomists and Scottists erected their rival camps. A false ambition took the place of earnestness among the preachers,—

"Each strives to make a show and to be heard;
Hence the inventions and the subtlety
The preachers use, while silent is the Word.

. . . . . .

Lapi and Burdi not so numerous are
In Florence as the fables that we find
Repeated in the pulpits every year;
So that the flocks, who know no better, turn
Back from their pastures, having fed on wind,
And vainly plead they could not fraud discern.

. . . . . .

Now goes the preacher forth with quibbles and
Buffooneries, and if a laugh he raise,
He swells his cowl, and makes no more demand."[1]

Meanwhile in many quarters, according to the complaint of a contemporary, "frugality was exchanged for magnificence. . . . Excitement to gluttony was not wanting; provocatives of the palate were eagerly sought after; ostentation increases; money makers exert them-

[1] "Purgatorio," xxix. 94, &c.

selves to supply these tastes, hence usuries, frauds, rapine, extortion, pillage." In the midst of these strange and incongruous scenes, Cimabue and Giotto were leading the way to a revival of art, and Dante was immortalising the hopes, the fears, and the fortunes of the age in his poems, instinct with the groans of humanity and the songs of heaven.

Such was the age in which anxious and bewildered men and women hung eagerly upon the words of Dr. John Tauler. His name will always be associated—as that of Origen with Alexandria, of Savonarola with Florence, Bernard with Cluny, Chalmers with Glasgow — with Strasbourg, the place of his birth and the scene of his greatest labours. There he was born in 1290, the year in which Dante's Beatrice and Michael Scot the magician died; and there, after some time spent in Paris, he returned to devote himself to the spiritual care of his fellow-townsmen. His residence among the scholastic divines of Paris may have been of service in giving strength and subtlety to his

mind, but it did not afford satisfaction to his heart. His disposition led him to the works of Dionysius,—

> "Who in the flesh, the nature, and the state
> Of angels with acutest vision knew,"—

of St. Bernard and St. Augustine rather than to those of Albertus Magnus, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus. Eckhart and Nicolas of Strasbourg had more attractions for him than the hair-splitters of the schools. "These great masters of Paris," he said once when preaching, "do read vast books and turn over the leaves with great diligence, which is a very good thing; but these (*i.e.*, the spiritually enlightened) read the true living book, wherein all things live: they turn over the pages of the heavens and the earth, and read therein the mighty and admirable wonders of God." The needs of the Spirit were more to Tauler than the questions of the schools. To minister to these needs was his aim; but even while drawing crowds of attentive and admiring hearers around him, his preaching was wanting in that success which an earnest heart must long to see. The fault was in

himself, of this he became convinced by the instrumentality of one of the most remarkable men of his age, Nicolas of Basle, the Friend of God in the Oberland. On his advice Tauler, convinced of his own personal spiritual deficiency, resolved to retire from public work, to give himself to an earnest search for that illuminating grace of which he felt the need; and the people of Strasbourg were astonished to learn that their much loved teacher, the one whom thousands had reverenced as a father, and who had been recognised as a leader among the enlightened, had abandoned his preaching work. Great was the consternation; but while people were marvelling, Tauler was spending days and weeks in striving to master an alphabet designed to show him how far short he yet was of the kingdom of God. Despair of ever mastering the duties so enjoined laid hold upon him, while through poverty he was obliged to part with his books. Body and mind were put to the extremes of suffering during well-nigh two years of painful silence, till at length the light visited his spirit. It

was the Feast of St. Paul's conversion, and Tauler, unable to attend chapel, remained in his cell, without help or comfort. As he lay, he began to meditate on the sufferings of Jesus Christ and His great love, and to think how poor had been his life compared with that vast love. Affected by the thought of his own unworthiness and the love of God, he cried, "O merciful God, have mercy upon me, a poor sinner," and a voice seemed to answer: "Stand fast in thy peace, and trust God, and know that when He was on earth, in human nature, He made the sick whom He healed in body sound also in soul." Then new strength and light visited his soul. Nicolas visited him again, and advised him to resume his work of preaching. The news that he was going to address the people again was soon spread everywhere; and on the day appointed a vast multitude of people thronged into the church to hear, and all eyes were turned to the lofty pulpit. Tauler ascended, and stood for a while with his hood over his face, as he prayed that God would enable him to speak to "the praise of His name" and

"the good of the people." But the thought of all the past and the sight of that great waiting multitude brought tears which choked all utterance. The congregation waited wondering, but as the preacher remained silent, impatience took the place of wonder; and at last a man spoke out of the crowd, "Sir, how long are we to stand here? It is getting late; if you do not mean to preach, let us go home." In vain Tauler tried to master his emotion, he was obliged to dismiss the congregation without a sermon. The story of the break down was in everybody's lips; his brother Dominicans felt that their Order had been disgraced, and his enemies said that he had evidently "become a downright fool."

The failure was a sore trial to Tauler, but he took it as a trial from God; and after a while he ascended the pulpit again, and facing the congregation, he said: "Dear children, it is now two years or more since I last preached. . . . It was then my custom to speak much Latin and to make many quotations; but I intend to do so no more. Dear children,

I have taken a text on which I mean to preach this sermon, and not to go beyond it. In the vulgar tongue it runs thus: 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.' The Bridegroom is our Lord Jesus Christ, and the bride is the Holy Church and Christendom. Now we are all called brides of Christ, wherefore we ought to be willing to go forth and meet our Bridegroom; but alas, we are not so. The true paths and straight highways by which to go out to meet the Bridegroom are, alas, nowadays quite deserted and falling into decay, till we have come hardly to perceive where they are."

He then went on to enlarge on what the bride must do in order to go and meet the Bridegroom. In doing so he spoke of the duties, the fears, the joys of the soul when it first learns the power of sin, the weakness of the flesh, and the love of Christ; how the bitter experiences of the soul, as it learns to surrender its own will and self-sufficiency, and lets Christ be all in all, are but the preparations of that joy in which the soul is wedded to Christ as her Lord and Bridegroom.

The effect of the sermon was marked. the preacher described the bliss of this m riage feast of the soul and sweetness of t Holy Spirit's presence, a man cried out, ' is true," and dropped down overcome w agitation ; and numbers besides were pow fully affected. Some of the results were might have been expected—those physi effects of over-excitement which were i unknown among the hysterical during t revivals in Ireland. But Tauler, thou rightly identified with the Mystics, had strong vein of common sense, and request the ladies of the neighbouring convent take "care of these sick people, and g them something warm to take when th come to themselves."

The change in Tauler's preaching was j of that character to awaken hostility—he v not content to amuse people for an ho he sought to influence their lives; he f that the ministry would be of no value wh did not bring the heart, and will, and actic of man into conformity with the will Christ. Accordingly he was persistent

opposing the worldly spirit of the clergy. "Like another Jerome, he denounced the effeminate manners and ostentatious habits of those who take up a religious life for the sake of the revenues and fees; . . . who seek their own pleasure in dainty face, dress, jewels, vanity, and the admiration of others wherever they can find it." Slandered, opposed, accused, because he dwelt so much on the inward work of the Spirit, of being a Beghard, or a Free Spirit disciple, he held on his way, denouncing with equal strength the voluptuous lives of monks and nuns, and the exaggerations of the Antinomian sectaries of the day. His labours were not wholly in vain. Many priests became quite pious, while the common people heard him gladly and loved him well.

His zeal and devotion were put to the severest tests, but the strong grace of God carried him victorious over all. A time of trouble and terror came. Strasbourg, in common with many cities of the Empire, refused to ratify the election of the "Parson King," Charles IV., who had been elected

under the influence of the Pope. The city was laid under an interdict: earthquake, storm, famine and plague swept across Europe. Terror roused fanaticism; and, like a troop of ghosts, the Flagellants moved in thousands upon their terrific journeys, while the Black Death smote Christendom with horror. Through all these paralysing ills Tauler remained loyal at his post. Neither the interdict of the Pope, the terror of plague, nor the fear of that awful death could drive him from the pulpit or the bedside of the dying. When in cowardice, or in blind and unworthy obedience to the Pope, the body of the clergy forsook Strasbourg, Tauler and two noble-hearted friends remained to carry the message of peace and the consolations of the faith to the homes of sickness and death. They did more: they issued a remonstrance, calling their brethren back to their duty, proclaiming that, as Christ had died for all men, no human being had power to close heaven by any interdict.

But such heroic devotion did not save him and his friends from the penalty of his bold-

ness. They were expelled from the city which owed them so much. A few years later Tauler returned to breathe his last breath in the city that he loved so well. He died, after a lingering illness, at the age of seventy. A rough-hewn stone, with a portrait, commemorates his life and labours.

As a preacher Tauler is entitled to a high place, whether we consider the force and persuasiveness of his style or the strong vein of personal piety which gives reality to his sermons. He may be regarded, perhaps, as the first sacred orator of his day in Germany; his language is forcible and simple, and full of a holy unction.[1] His discourses are sometimes disfigured by bad taste, or rendered obscure by his fondness for mystical allegories; but he prepared his sermons with method, and breathed into them a lofty moral tone.[2] Well versed in the needs of the conscience and heart,[3] and experimentally acquainted with the hidden ways by which Almighty Love sometimes leads His children

1 "Nouvelle Biographie," vol. xliv. p. 931. 2 Ibid.
3 Migne, "Nouvelle Cyclop. Theol. Biog. Chrét." tom. iii.

Sound sense and fervent spirituality combined as they are, notwithstanding defects in theology and style, in Dr. John Tauler may lead us to bless God, who never left Himself nor His Church without witness in her darkest epochs, and to hold in reverent and affectionate memory the heroic life and loving spirit of the Illuminated Doctor.

A selection of his sermons has been brought within the reach of English readers by the energy of Miss S. Winkworth, to whose pen English people owe the opening of so many treasures of German piety. The sermons for Ash Wednesday, the Thursday in Easter week, the Fourth Sunday after Easter, and for Ascension Day are fair specimens.

IX.

LUTHER.

"*Er predigte wie Paulus aller Orten*
Und scheute nicht der ottern Gift und Biss
Der Glaube war sein Helm, die Schrift sein Panzer
Mit Gottes Hülfe war sein Sieg gewiss."

IX.

IN the year 1562 a gentleman was digging in his garden, when his spade suddenly struck against a hard, tough substance. After a little difficulty the soil was removed, and a book, carefully wrapped in weather-proof covering, was brought to light. On opening it, it proved to be a copy, perhaps the only surviving copy, of a work, all editions of which had been ordered by papal authority to be destroyed. It was reverently handled by the finder, and stowed away as a precious heirloom of his family, for it gave back with vividness, with a hundred home touches, whimsical characteristics, and blended quaintness and pathos, the portrait of one loved then by many, and now honoured as a national hero and the representative of an epoch. It was the Table Talk of Martin

Pico della Mirandola—crowded the court of the Medici. Another voice, ominous of yet deeper change, was heard in Florence. There Savonarola, who preferred the crown of martyrdom to the robes of a cardinal, was to be seen waging war against the vices of his day, against the covetousness of prelates, which

> "Overcast the world with mourning, underfoot
> Treading the good, and raising bad men up,"

and against the tyrant rule of princes; now refusing to be bribed into silence, now crying by the dying bed of Lorenzo,—

> "Loose Florence, or God will not loose thy soul."

When the ship which carried Columbus was slowly ploughing her way to the shores of the New World, and the Florentine reformer was ministering to the dying Lorenzo, Martin Luther was still a fresh-looking, high-browed, crisp-haired peasant lad, roaming about the streets of Eisleben, somewhat in awe of the well-meant but stern discipline of an austere father and a harsh mother. A few years later the family circumstances have improved, and the little peasant lad is known as an

The Bible was continually in his hands: he studied it till he knew the page and place of every text. Modern art has told us again how, exhausted by long fasting, he fainted, the Bible still in his grasp, and was revived by the sound of music. At length the clouds began to clear. Laid on a sick bed, he found, like Christian in the castle of Giant Despair, that the key of deliverance had been all the while within reach. "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," said the old confessor at his bedside; and Luther saw for the first time that the Apostles' Creed had been preaching to him the good news of pardon, and that the love of God had already taken his part.

The truth set his heart free and unlocked his lips; and when summoned, as he was in 1508, to lecture on Philosophy and Divinity at the new university of Wittenberg, he was ready to teach and to preach. Soon the fame of his powers spread abroad. There was the freshness of personal conviction in his style, which drew crowds to listen to the young preacher. His

own living experiences were of practical service, enabling him to teach as one who had an insight into the needs, the hidden vices, and the secret aspiration of the human heart.[1]

But other and more troublous days were at hand. The infamous traffic in indulgences began. Luther refused to recognise any license to sin, or to declare absolution to an unrepentant heart. The Professor at Wittenberg formally proclaimed what the great poet of Italy had sung two centuries earlier,—

> Ch' assolver non si può chi non si pente;
> Nè pentere e volere insieme puossi,
> Per la contraddizion che nol consente.[2]

It was the beginning of the struggle, the issues of which were unknown to the combatants. Luther was committed to the conflict, from which he would gladly have shrunk,[3] but which he must thenceforward maintain, sometimes single-handed, some-

[1] Klein, "Essai sur Luther considéré comme prédicateur."

[2] Inferno, xxvii.

[3] "I would have good peaceable days, and be free from tumult; but it is Thy cause, Lord, the true eternal cause." —Luther's prayer at the time of his appearing before the Diet of Worms.

times timidly protected by princes, often harassed by the follies and crimes of those who sought to shelter their extravagances under the ægis of his name.[1] The choice was made, and the way on which he entered led to perils at Augsburg, disputation at Leipzig, denunciation from Rome, and the lonely agony at Worms. Through all he is a simple man, passing through the most natural phases of feeling—now full of misgiving, now animated by heroic courage, resolved to go forward though the roofs bristled with demons; now conscious of his own weakness, now rising to holy trust in God and breaking forth, as the towers of Worms rose to view, into the noble Psalm, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott," the "Marseillaise"[2] of the Reformation, whose notes

[1] "Der name Luther's gegen seinen Willen
Ward überall zur Loosung nun gemacht
Er stand auf jener Bauern blut' gem Banner
Mit seinem Liede zog man in die Schlacht."
—Der 10th November. Luther, Scharhorst, Schiller. A Poem. Weissensee, 1864.

[2] This expression occurs in Audin's "Life of Luther;" but a German writer had previously made use of it when he called Luther, "Der componist der geistigen 'Marseiller Hymne,' 'Ein' feste Burg,'" &c.—C. Schmidt, "Luther eine Characteristik," p. 68.

industrious and pure-minded student at Erfurt. His father has formed projects for him: he must study the law. But a new power has entered upon his life, and is soon to make itself felt. Turning over the books in the academical library, shortly after his arrival at Erfurt, he had come across a Latin Bible: it had become a source of new interest to his mind, and had started thoughts and misgivings which the sudden death of his friend Alexis has served to deepen. One summer's evening he gathered his friends round him for the last time; but no word of farewell was spoken; the young student's mind was made up, and his purpose was locked in his own bosom; the guests departed; and before the morning's sun had risen the doors of the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt had closed upon Martin Luther. "I entered," he said, "the monastery despairing of myself. I thought God would not take my part." His sojourn at the monastery is the chronicle of his soul-conflict. Rigid, austere to himself, racked by mental trials and wasted by self-inflicted penances, peace of mind was far from him.

The Bible was continually in his hands: he studied it till he knew the page and place of every text. Modern art has told us again how, exhausted by long fasting, he fainted, the Bible still in his grasp, and was revived by the sound of music. At length the clouds began to clear. Laid on a sick bed, he found, like Christian in the castle of Giant Despair, that the key of deliverance had been all the while within reach. "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," said the old confessor at his bedside; and Luther saw for the first time that the Apostles' Creed had been preaching to him the good news of pardon, and that the love of God had already taken his part.

The truth set his heart free and unlocked his lips; and when summoned, as he was in 1508, to lecture on Philosophy and Divinity at the new university of Wittenberg, he was ready to teach and to preach. Soon the fame of his powers spread abroad. There was the freshness of personal conviction in his style, which drew crowds to listen to the young preacher. His

ciples of order and charity: the tumult was hushed, peace was restored, and Wittenberg saved for better work. The Reformation movement was now felt everywhere. From every city and village of the civilised world, from the mountain hamlets of Scotland, from the colleges and halls of Oxford and Cambridge, from the streets of London and Paris, from the quays and market-places of Antwerp and Amsterdam, from the banks of the Rhine and the Danube, there were eyes that turned lovingly and longingly to Wittenberg. A double stream began to flow to and from the little German town. From it there flowed books, pamphlets, tracts, versions of the Bible. Printers published at their own expense as Luther wrote: [1] his writings had an unheard-of circulation.[2] Towards it there flowed a stream of pilgrims. Thither flocked the flower of the German youth.[3] Students

[1] Froude, "History of England," vol. ii. p. 29.

[2] "Luther's Schriften fanden einen unerhörten Absatz." —Heinrich Lang, "M. Luther, ein religioses Charakterbilde," p. 96. Berlin, 1870.

[3] Ranke, "History of the Reformation in Germany," vol. iii. p. 11.

[illegible] strangers looked eagerly [illegible] the first glimpse of the two towers [illegible] they came in sight [illegible] their renewed thanks to God [illegible] from Wittenberg, as [illegible] Jerusalem, preceded the [illegible] spread thence to [illegible]

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

[illegible] the arrival of pilgrims a simple [illegible] turn in a noble and imperish- [illegible] with the Reformer. [illegible] was received by Luther [illegible] pilgrims with dish [illegible] of their meeting; they [illegible] for a simple work, but [illegible] memorial of their interview [illegible] Epistles translated into [illegible]

[illegible] quoted in [illegible] p. [illegible]
[illegible] p. [illegible]
[illegible] Introduction, p. [illegible]

The mind of Luther was alive to other questions. He saw that the education of the people on a sound and liberal basis was essential to the development of civilisation and intelligence. Earnestly he pressed this need upon the burgomasters and magistrates of the German towns—urging them to build schools, to establish libraries, and to encourage the study of the fine arts, law, medicine, history; for "they are profitable for the learning of the wonders and works of God."[1]

Thus in translations, preachings, controversies, schemes for the advancement of all high and useful knowledge, Luther laboured on till the end came. It came to him when employed as a peacemaker. He set forth on a weary winter journey to reconcile the Counts of Mansfeld, when sickness overtook him at Eisleben. He spoke of the love of God. Frequently he repeated the words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth!" Friends beside his bed asked, "Will

[1] Ranke, "History of the Reformation in Germany," vol. iii. p. 101.

and a poet, be heard: "We scarcely know what we owe to Luther and the Reformation. We are freed from the fetters of spiritual narrow-mindedness."[1] Let an Englishman speak: "The most inspired of all teachers since the first apostles of his faith."[2] In the voices of controversy we hear though [illegible] hundred years have passed [illegible] Exaggerated [illegible] and words of wise [illegible] men: [illegible] dust of [illegible] Reformer [illegible] out of all human [illegible] [illegible] His [illegible] [illegible] evidence of [illegible] [illegible]

[1] [illegible]
[2] [illegible]
[3] [illegible]

thing but what he was—a representative man, the embodiment[1] of some of the mightiest thoughts and aspirations which were abroad, a human being of like passions with ourselves, a German[2] possessing in marked degree the peculiar excellences and weaknesses of his race—an affectionate, strong-minded, rough-speaking, nervously excitable,[3] and above all, conscience-honouring man, who "would not make his judgment blind." To estimate his character he must be seen at home—speaking cheerily to his friends, fondling his children, meditating aloud on the works of God,[4] hanging heart-broken over his dying, much-loved daughter Madeline, or telling with startling realism and quaint

[1] C. Schmidt, "Luther war das Herz seiner Zeit," p. 69.

[2] "Of all the great men whom Germany has produced, Luther was the most German character."—M. de Staël, quoted in Mackintosh's Essays. Compare "Wer Luther war? ein freier mann gewiss: ein mann des Volks, der nicht Lateinisch, nicht Römisch, sondern mit seinem Landsleuten deutsch und deutlich zu reden wüsste."—Koegel, "Wer Luther war." Reformations predigt. Berlin, 1869.

[3] P. Bruno Schön, "Luther war in seinen nervenparthien uberreizt." M. Luther auf dem standpunkte der Psychiatrie beurtheilt, p. 39. Wien, 1874.

[4] See Stoughton's "Homes and Haunts of Luther," p. 240.

humour his battles with the tempter. We then see one "with whom religion is not a thing of words and phrases, not a thing of habit and custom, of convention and tradition, but an intense, vivid reality which governs the pulses of his heart and the motions of his will."[1] Such a man was fitted to become a preacher at an age when personal earnestness was scant and sacred eloquence had sunk to the nadir.[2]

Into the pulpit, in the place of legends of saints, Luther brought the Word of God, deep spiritual experiences, and a mind which did not think it beneath his dignity to explain the verities of the faith in a simple, lively, and attractive style.[3] He preached to the people: he felt that he was one of them, and he laboured in his sermons to make himself one with them.[4] To this earnest desire for the

[1] Hare's "Vindication," p. 89.

[2] "A l'epoque de la Reformation l'eloquence Chrétienne etait en pleine decadence."—Klein, "Essai sur Luther," p. 4.

[3] Ibid. p. 4.

[4] "Il aime le peuple: il est fier de lui appartenir: ir épreuve un besoin irresistible de s'en rapprocher et de le conduire au salut."—Ibid.

salvation of his hearers he joined natural gifts—wealth of ideas, power of imagination, an easy elocution, a strong voice, a vigorous frame,[1] and an intensity and vehemence of passion worthy of Demosthenes.[2] These qualities, quickened into action by the power of his enthusiasm, contributed to that "eloquence for which he was famed by all his contemporaries, and which he was not grudgingly admitted to possess, even by his enemies."

He abounds in passages which, even at this distance of time, make our hearts throb within us as we read them.[3] It is easy for cold-hearted critics to scan his sermons with a prejudiced eye and unsympathetic disposition, and proclaim his writings unmarked by any impressive eloquence; but no man can fully judge of eloquence without identifying himself with the multitudes who heard with minds awakened and souls kindled by the thoughts and needs of their era. Those who

[1] Moroni, Diz. Eccles, tom. xl. p. 182.

[2] "Edinburgh Review," vol. lxxxii. p. 103. [3] Ibid.

do so will agree with Frederick Schlegel rather than Hallam, that Luther "displays a most original eloquence, surpassed by few names in the whole history of literature;" and will endorse the language of Archdeacon Hare, "that Luther was distinguished by the faculty of presenting grand truths clearly, vividly, in words which elevate and enlighten men's minds, stir their hearts and control their wills, and show by their wide and lasting effect the best witness of their power."[1]

His power remains, for his preaching continues in the noblest work of his life—the translation of the Bible. It lay "in the dust of libraries,"[2] till Luther drew it forth and made it speak once more in a language understanded of the people. Its publication was an epoch in the literature as well as in the religious thought of Germany.[3] He then gave back their heritage into the hands of the nation, "supplying them with a people's book which no nation in the Catholic world

[1] Archdeacon Hare, "Vindication of Luther," p. 15.
[2] Koegel, p. 6. *Vide supra.*
[3] Mackintosh, Essays, p. 521.

can boast."[1] This work alone would stamp his life with dignity and his labours with imperishable renown, not only as a literary achievement,[2] but as opening the fountains of eternal strength and unfailing hope to after-generations.

[1] Hegel, "Philosophy of History," p. 415. Bohn's ed.

[2] C. T. Gérold, "Luther consideré exégète," p. 124. Strasbourg, 1866.

X.

HERDER.

King of comforts, King of life,
Thou hast cheer'd me;
And when fears and doubts were rife,
Thou hast clear'd me."

X.

IT is often the fate of many-sided men that some of their talents are lost sight of amid the blaze of their other and more conspicuous gifts, as the light of Mercury is buried in the coronal of the sun. This is true of Herder. His name belongs to the literature of Germany. He is remembered as a brilliant writer, of vast erudition and philosophical spirit; but the lustre which belongs to his literary position dims his pulpit reputation. The preacher is forgotten in the poet and thinker, yet the congregations which thronged to hear his sermons were witnesses to his ability as truly as the student who listened to his lectures or the households who read his poems.

It is not the object of this paper to touch upon, still less to discuss or defend, his theo-

logical position. It was, perhaps, too indeterminate to be ever properly assigned; but his pulpit labours may supply us with hints and helps.

Herder was born in 1744, and died in 1803. His lot, therefore, was cast in a period of European change and of new activities in Germany. In the earlier part of his life he saw Germany enslaved by French ideas and French fashions; in its later part the shadow of the French sword had begun to hover over his country.

The mocking scepticism of Bolingbroke had been welcomed in France, where an immoral Court and a virulent Infidelity had joined hands against the Christian faith. To France there poured a full stream of the youth and nobility of Germany, who returned to their native land converts to the worship of reason, wit, and what was called good taste. Foremost in setting this unhealthy fashion was Frederick the Great, whose patron saint was Voltaire. "Were I a Heathen," he wrote, "I would worship you under the name of Apollo; were I a Jew, I would assign you

a place beside the kingly prophet and his son; were I a Papist, I would make you my guardian saint and my father confessor. But as I am none of these, I can do no more than content myself with admiring you as a philosopher, loving you as a poet, and honouring you as a friend." The infection of the royal example spread, and the spirit of unbelief was diffused among the people, and what has been called the Apostasy of Germany[1] commenced. But it was not without good that an age of greater intellectual activity began. The religionists of the previous age had supported a stiff and pedantic orthodoxy, and life and thought were growing stagnant, when the new epoch dawned with its splendid names. "Only think of the immortal creations," wrote one, a vigorous opponent of loose theology, "of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, in philosophy; of Klopstock, Winckelmann, Lessing, Jean Paul, Goethe, Schiller, in poetry and prose; and Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven in music!"[2]

[1] "Germany and its Universities," by Dr. P. Schaff, p. 147.
[2] Schaff, p. 148.

In an age of such conflicting forces and among stars of such brilliancy, Herder was to take no mean place nor one of splendid inutility. He was born at Morungen. His father was a poor schoolmaster, sincere and narrow-minded, who limited with strict jealousy young Herder's studies to his Bible and Hymn-book. Injudicious as was this well-meant caution, it gave to young Herder the opportunity of a deep knowledge of the Bible, and was the source in after years of an intense and passionate fondness for the sacred books. He acknowledged that no books that he had ever read had produced so profound an impression upon his mind as his first reading of Job, of Isaiah, and the Gospels.[1] But his wish for knowledge could not be repressed. He would wander forth from home, and seated in a little extemporised cradle, formed of a strap[2] suspended on the branch of a tree, he would devour the forbidden fruit of books. Thus large stores of information were acquired.

[1] Kopp, "Étude sur Herder," p. 37.
[2] "Migne "Nouvelle Encyclop. Biog." art. "Herder."

Later he studied at Königsberg, under Kant. There was at one time a thought of making him a doctor; but his nerves, whose weakness tried him to the very last, were found to be unequal to the work, for on his first visit to the operating-room he fainted. His mind and taste, moreover, had been turning to theology; while the acquaintance he had formed at Königsberg with Hamann had given him a taste for Oriental languages and literature. As early as 1764 he was appointed assistant-professor and preacher at the cathedral school at Riga. So great was his pulpit success that it was found necessary to give him a larger church. His pupils at the school and his congregation at church regarded him with enthusiastic affection.[1] "In the pulpit he captivated all hearts by his eloquence. Among his pupils he diffused the sentiments which animated his own heart." Preaching and teaching at Riga, he began to appeal by his writings to a much wider audience, and his appeal was against the feeble and false literary taste of the day. "How magnificently, how

[1] Migne, "Nouvelle Encyclop. Biog." art. "Herder."

irreconcilably, did he blaze into indignation against the creeping and crawling vermin of the times; against German coarseness of taste, against all sceptres in brutal paws, and against the snakes of the age."[1]

In 1775 he was invited by the Grand Duke to take the post of Court preacher and Consistorial Councillor at Weimar, and this place became his residence till his death, in 1803. The end came slowly. A nervous weariness of life laid hold upon him: "Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum" was the spirit of his ceaseless outcry. He fought with this soul-consuming evil; he wrestled with it as a maniac."[2] He began to see with almost morbid vividness the mistakes of his life; he regretted that he had not accepted a post once offered him at Gottingen.[3] "Oh, my mistaken life!" he exclaimed. To rouse, him change of scene was tried; he visited Dresden, and under the influence of elevating scenes and

[1] Jean Paul Richter, in De Quincey, vol. xii. p. 130.

[2] De Quincey, ditto, p. 120.

[3] "Het was vooral ook met het oog hierop, dat Herder niet lang voör zijn dood weemoedig intriep: 'O mein werfulgter Leben.'" J. E. Dibbets—Herder, "Beschouwd als Theolog," Utrecht, 1863.

kindly attentions he revived a little. "The library, the picture gallery, the cathedral service, all tended to regenerate him." . . . "The Elector, a man of talent and learning, wished to see him, and at a private interview paid him a very high and just compliment."[1] But the revival of health and spirits was only temporary. He returned to Weimar to die. Soon, reading aloud was too much for him, and even the harpsichord affected him too powerfully. He longed for some new thoughts. He commenced a hymn to God, but it lay unfinished on his desk. Pain and hysteria troubled him much, till, wearied out, he slept, and in his sleep "slumbered away into the arms of God."

In 1819 a tablet of cast iron was placed on his grave by royal authority. It bore the simple words, "Licht, Liebe, Leben."

In preaching, Herder laid out his strength not to dilate on philosophical themes or doctrinal subtleties. To explain the Bible, and to bring out its teaching in its bearing on daily practical life, was the ideal of the preacher's

[1] De Quincey.

office which he seems to have entertained. To this end, the "historical parts of the Bible, Christ's teachings and example, were continually brought into use. Numerous examples from life served to render the idea clearer and more forcible. From the history of the world, from nature, from an observation of current events, came to him an inexhaustible store of views that were turned to the best account."[1] To this store of illustrative knowledge he added a deep acquaintance with the general disposition and heart-cravings of his fellow-countrymen. He understood all the needs of his nation.[2] He knew its character, its defects, its qualities, and the path which it was pursuing.[3] As carefully as he eschewed philosophical disquisition in the pulpit, he avoided everything that could be called declamation. He used no flowers of speech, but he depended upon simplicity as the best ornament; yet he

[1] Il veut que l'explication de la Bible soit la tâche principale du prédicateur. Kopp, "Étude sur Herder," p 55.

[2] A. Werner, "Herder als Theolog." Berlin, 1871.

[3] H. Schmidt, "Études sur la Littérature Allemande," "Herder considéré comme critique," p. 73. Paris, 1869.

seldom failed to impress those who heard him. Without action, without much variety in intonation, he carried his audience with him.[1]

It is said that he seldom wrote his sermons, but there can be little doubt that he took the greatest care in their preparation. More probable is the statement that he wrote them out beforehand in shorthand, and that having added an analysis or outline, he was ready to preach.[2]

It would not be difficult to enlarge upon his deflections from orthodoxy, and to show the fluctuations in his own teaching; but this is not our province. We are to learn, and from Herder we may learn to store the mind with knowledge, to study the age in which our lot is cast, and the disposition, hopes, and needs of the human beings among whom we live, to make scriptural instruction our aim, and to join with him in the hope expressed in the earlier years of his ministry: "May it [the Bible] be a light on my path, and in the

[1] Kopp, "Étude sur Herder," p. 66.
[2] C L. Ring, "Leben von Herder," p. 53.

evening of my life, when in the last hours my spirits flag, and yet for the last time life's taper kindles up, to be quenched again as an expiring lamp, then, O my God, *then* let the passages of Thy Word be the resting-place of my heart, and at the final moment lift my spirit up, that I, with quiet heavenly thoughts and comforting hopes, may step forth upon my eternal career. Amen." [1]

[1] Sermon on the "Divinity and Right Use of the Bible," preached in 1769. It is translated in Fish's "History and Repository of Sacred Eloquence," p. 649.

XI.

BOSSUET.

" *Così vidi adunar la bella scuola*
Di quel signor dell 'altissimo canto,
Che sovra gli altri com 'aquila vola."—Inf. iv.

XI.

"I NEVER heard so early or so late a sermon." The words were spoken by the first[1] of French wits. The hour was midnight, and the preacher was only sixteen, but he had enchanted the habitués of the Hôtel Rambouillet. A brilliant assemblage confronted the young orator that night, when he entered the blue drawing-room, for the Hôtel Rambouillet was the rendezvous[2] of all the wits of the time; but repose and strength are written on his face, for, young as he is, he has convictions. A subject is given him, and a few minutes allowed to collect his thoughts; and for the first time true eloquence is heard by men and women

[1] Voltaire, "Siècle."

[2] Abbé Guettée, "Histoire de l'Eglise de France," tom. x. p. 393.

accustomed to listen to the sermons of Cassaigne and the Abbé Cotin.[1] The witticism with which Voiture commemorated the discourse has become famous; but it is the celebrity of the young preacher that has made it so, for the preacher's name was Bossuet. He was born at Dijon, in a small street at the back of the cathedral, September 27, 1627. On that night his grandfather sat up reading his Bible, and when the birth of the little child was announced to him, he entered the name of the new member of the household in the family Bible, and added to it the verse he had just read: "He led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye."[2]

His father was a man of some local influence, who a few years later removed to the city of Metz, where he had been appointed Doyen des Conseillers. The care of the children's education devolved upon his elder brother, Claude Bossuet, a man of cultivated mind and tastes. His uncle's library

[1] Mennechet, "Littérature Modern," art. "Bossuet."
[2] Deut. xxxii. 10.

was a realm of delight to young Bossuet: here he spent his holidays; here he gathered many of his treasures of knowledge; here he learned to store his memory with the poetry of Greece and Rome; here, too, he first became acquainted with a book which gave a new bias to his mind and life. He took it down one day from the shelves: it was adorned with pictures; but the words, not the pictures, arrest the child's attention. They are glowing words, instinct with a spirit he has never met with before: they cast a spell over the boy; he reads silent and entranced for a while, and then, taking fire at their eloquence, he breaks out reading aloud, to the amazement of his father and uncle, who are busily discussing politics. From that day forward the book was his constant companion, the food of his spirit, the first of his studies. It was a happy moment for him and for his Church when he came across it, for that book was the Bible. Wherever he travelled he carried his Bible with him; often he might be seen with Bible in hand, pacing along in thought, his finger between the

leaves. "I cannot live without it," was his language in later years.

The education of young Bossuet was carried on by the Jesuit Fathers, between whom and himself in after life there was so wide a gulf. When sixteen he was sent to Paris, and entered at the Collège de Navarre, then the favourite college in the metropolis. In the same year he made his extempore oration at the Hôtel Rambouillet. Such a success might have been disastrous to the after usefulness of many a young man; but Bossuet was fortunate enough to meet with one who proved a more real friend than those who flatter and forget. Mgr. Cospéan, the Bishop of Lisieux, took him by the hand, gave him encouragement, kindly sympathy, and sage counsel; and Bossuet was saved from being the star of an hour that he might be a real light to his Church. Many an evanescent marvel of premature preaching has been forgotten, but the name of Bossuet stands in the first magnitude among the luminaries of the French Church. Following wise advice, the next few years of his life

were years of study. During this period he laid the real foundation of that patristic learning which he wielded with such effect in more active times. The intensity of his study is witnessed by the familiar way in which in his sermons he quotes from the Fathers. Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose Clement of Alexandria, Cyril, Jerome, Basil, Hilary, Tertullian, Chrysostom, all are made use of; but pre-eminently St. Augustine was his master. Over his writings he continually pored: he made marginal notes, extracts, abridgments; he familiarised himself with his style, teaching, and even his expressions. As years passed, his admiration of the great Latin Father increased.

Metz was the first scene of his ecclesiastical labours. Though offered a very high position in Paris, he felt that duty called him to the obscurer sphere of work. Here he laboured for seven years, till, in 1659 he was summoned to Paris, and preached before the queen. To Parisian society, accustomed to the studied and pedantic homilies of more courtly divines, the glowing and earnest

[illegible] consequence of Louis came with [illegible] of novelty. All society was [illegible] magnificence which astonished [illegible] from repose.[1]

Themselves, for our [illegible] manner without rival, the capital [illegible] to command the air of Paris is [illegible] that of France. And France [illegible] was the France in the age [illegible] has reckoned among the four [illegible] history as the one which "approx[illegible] to perfection."[2] It was France [illegible] most brilliant period in the reign [illegible] Monarque, when the young King [illegible] the reins of government as they [illegible] strong hands of Mazarin,[3] who [illegible] humiliated,[4] and the Court of R[illegible] pelled to give satisfaction: [illegible] was purchased, Portugal su[illegible] Flanders conquered. It was th[illegible]

[illegible] p. [illegible]

[2] "Siècle de Louis XIV," p. [illegible] ed. [illegible]

[3] "Lettres d'Henriette Deschamel," [illegible]

[4] "Des nous guide de la Troisième" [illegible] France," vol. [illegible] p. [illegible]

[5] Voltaire, "Siècle de Louis XIV," p. [illegible]

the sovereign, who "loved no glory but his own,"[1] found himself surrounded by names whose title to fame has been based on a nobler foundation than that of kings,—by Turenne and Condé; by Boileau, Molière, and Racine. Such was the society, and such the era, in which Bossuet commanded attention. But not merely the world of fashion followed his preaching, men of thought, and men of earnest convictions and deep-hearted piety, thronged to hear him. When he delivered the Lenten course of sermons at the Church of the Carmelites, the Port Royalists were among his auditors. There, listening to the fervent words spoken by that sweet, strong, and flexible voice, sat the great Arnauld,[2] whose work on "The Art of Thinking" Boileau declared had perfected human reason, and who proclaimed the unwearying earnestness of his spirit in his words to one who spoke of rest. "Rest! shall we not have all eternity in which to rest?"[3] Not far off

[1] Michelet, "Histoire de France," tom. xiii. p. 268.
[2] Floquet, "Etudes sur la Vie de Bossuet." Paris, 1855.
[3] Mennechet, arts. "Pascal," "Arnauld," &c. vol. iii. p. 134.

might be seen Pierre Nicole, whose Essays were pronounced by Voltaire[1] to be a *chef d'œuvre* unequalled in the literature of antiquity. And one greater than the preacher himself we may picture as present, Pascal,[2] who has just given to the world his "Provincial Letters." In 1669, after having reigned supreme among French preachers, he was appointed Bishop of Condom; and at the same time a new preacher's name began to be whispered in Paris, and Bourdaloue was ready to mount the pulpit which Bossuet was about to vacate, and to rival[3] his illustrious predecessor's fame. But before Bossuet could be consecrated to his bishopric he was called upon to take up a style of preaching which requires peculiar gifts, and in which he proved himself unrivalled among French

[1] Menzeichen, arts. "Pascal," "Arnauld," &c. vol. iii. pp. 134–5.

[2] According to Floquet, Pascal was present. Professor Gandar, Bossuet Orateur, p. 368, doubts whether Pascal was in Paris at the time.

[3] Voltaire, Siècle, ch. xxxii. p. 394, ed. 1840. M. Villemain, while admitting that Bourdaloue is a rival, yet calls Bossuet "le premier des orateurs sans doute." ("Essai sur l'Oraison Funèbre," p. 52.)

preachers.[1] He was summoned to pronounce the funeral oration of Queen Henrietta Maria, and six months afterwards that of her daughter, the Duchess of Orleans. The exordium of the former has been pronounced by Cardinal Bausset to be perhaps the most imposing in ancient or modern eloquence.[2] But the sad, sudden, and suspicious death of the duchess—her youth, her recent triumph in diplomacy, and the fatherly affection with which Bossuet had ever regarded her — have thrown a peculiar charm around the latter. It has been well said that in the one sermon it is the genius, but in the other it is the soul, of the preacher which speaks. The one is a studied oration, but the other gives utterance to the cries and tears of a stunned and bewildered Court. The very text must have wakened an echo in the hearts of the auditors, as they thought how soon the daughter had followed the mother; how in one hour the schemes of politicians, the pride of rank, and the beauty of youth had been

[1] De Bausset, "Histoire de Bossuet." Liv. iii.
[2] Ibid.

resignation to God's will, and her deep and humble repentance."

Bossuet had scarcely been consecrated Bishop of Condom when he felt himself conscientiously bound to resign the see. He was invited by Louis XIV. to undertake the education of the Dauphin—fils de roi, père de roi, mais jamais roi—and he resolved not to attempt to hold two appointments, the work of one of which must necessarily suffer. Accordingly he devoted himself heart and soul to the education of the young prince, always keeping in mind that in this trust he owed even more than a duty to the king—a duty to France and to the world in the training given to the heir apparent.

> "Ce n'est plus à vous qu'il faut que je réponde,
> Ce n'est plus votre fils, c'est le maître du monde." [1]

When his labours as preceptor were ended, Bossuet was appointed to the Bishopric of Meaux, and his life thenceforward is that of the bishop and the controversialist rather than that of the preacher. To the supervision of his diocese and to his official duties he gave

[1] Racine.

devoted and unwearied attention, till at length his work was done. He was attacked by a painful disease:[1] he resigned his see; and his life ebbed away slowly under the repeated assaults of his malady. During his last weeks of life he had the Scriptures read to him continually. The fourteenth of St. John[2] was his greatest comfort. He felt his salvation "safer in God's hands than in his own." He wished to have the Lord's Prayer repeated to him again and again: "it included everything." Its words were the last on his lips. "Scio enim cui credidi." "Fiat voluntas tua."[3] And so he passed away on the 12th of April, 1704.

For a long time it was believed that Bossuet never wrote his sermons.[4] The traditional account, given on the authority—the very highest attainable, as it seemed—of the Abbé le Dieu, who was his constant

[1] Guettée, "Hist. de l'Eglise de France," tom. xi. p. 219.

[2] See account of his last illness in "Bossuet and his Contemporaries," by the author of "Life of St. Francis de Sales." Rivingtons, 1874.

[3] Guettée, "Hist. de l'Eglise de France," tom xi. p. 219.

[4] See "Notice sur Bossuet," by Dussault, p. 3; and "Mélanges Historiques," &c., by M. le Baron Barante.

companion for twenty years, was that he simply threw together on a sheet of paper a few of his leading thoughts and more important quotations, thought over them carefully, knelt in prayer, and then was ready to ascend the pulpit. But, authoritative as the story seemed, more recent and careful researches have shown that it is at least not wholly correct,[1] as many of his sermons were completely written out beforehand. This writing appears to have been only undertaken as useful in putting himself in full command of his subject, since, though carefully preserving the substance and order of the discourse, he never fettered himself by its words or expressions; since, as he himself said more than once, such a constraint of memory would have weakened both his action and sermon.[2] But on many occasions he no doubt made no direct preparation beyond that described by Le Dieu. Yet even so he cannot be said to have spoken

[1] See the whole question discussed by the Abbé Vaillant, in his work, "Études sur les Sermons de Bossuet," &c. Paris, 1867.

[2] Gandar, "Bossuet Orateur," pp. 44, 45.

that in his own case his eloquence waited on him as a servant, was not sought for with anxiety, but seemed drawn on naturally by the subject; or that in his sermons there blended together those two bright and clear tokens of genius—loftiness of thought and simplicity of expression.[1]

Indications like these of the simple earnest piety of Bossuet should be carefully cherished, lest, when reading his public life, we should too hastily or too harshly judge him when we see him overbearing, unjust, and haughty to Fénélon, or lacking the courage of a Chrysostom in the presence of the king.[2] If we are disposed to censure in him the arrogance of sacerdotal infallibility,[3] or view his tenacious adherence to forms and traditions as a remnant of Jewish Pharisaism,[4] we shall think of him more tenderly when we remember that this great man, who "filled his age with his immense labours,"[5] sought before preaching to raise his heart in prayer to the inexhaust-

[1] "Mélanges Historiques," Barante, tom. i. p. 41.
[2] Cf. Sismondi, "Histoire de France," vol. xxv. pp. 482–5.
[3] Ibid. vol. xxvi. p. 247. [4] Crowe, vol. iv. p. 66.
[5] Michelet, "Histoire de France," vol. xiii. p. 266.

ible source of all grace; and even though we censure, let us follow his advice:[1] "Before ascending the pulpit let us hearken to the voice of our heavenly Master, and preach nothing but what He tells us."

Among the sermons of Bossuet, that on "Final Impenitence" should be read; and "The Honour of the World" is worth studying as illustrating the use he made of St. Augustine. It is referred to by Professor Gandar as one in his best style. Of others which will repay perusal are "The True Spirit of Christianity," "Death and the Immortality of the Soul," "The Importance of Salvation," "The Love of Pleasure." These last are printed in "Sermons Choisis de Bossuet," &c., by M. Silvestre de Sacy. Paris, 1859.

[1] "Méditation sur l'Evangile, la Dernière Semaine du Sauveur," lvii. Journée.

XII.

BOURDALOUE.

"For sluggard's brow the laurel never grows;
Renown is not the child of indolent repose."

XII.

THE life of Bourdaloue does not yield the same variety of interest that belongs to his great predecessor in the French pulpit. Bossuet is something more than a preacher. His name mingles with the history of the Gallican Church, its controversies and its struggles for independence. We think of him at Court instructing the Dauphin, among the clergy of France directing their assemblies, or towering in oratorical strength and passion over the brilliant congregations at St. Denis or Versailles; but Bourdaloue's name is associated with one work, that of the pulpit. He was a preacher: of no man could it more truly be said that he devoted himself to one object in life. "This one thing I do," might have been his motto. The early years

of his life were one prolonged preparation; its meridian was one splendid and unchallenged supremacy in the pulpit; and in its closing period it was his delight to minister in convent, hospital, or asylum, till he fell a victim to his zeal, exhausted by his own energy and the importunity of his admirers.

Louis Bourdaloue was born at Bourges, in 1632. He early displayed talents which marked his fitness for the sacred calling; but his father, who had at one time entertained thoughts of devoting himself to the ministry, but had afterwards changed his mind, was fearful lest the same mistake should be repeated in his son's life; and consequently he withheld his consent to the theological training of his son till he had tested the reality of his call and of his suitability for that high office. The training of young Louis was then entrusted to the Jesuits; eighteen[1] years were spent one way or another in preparation before he commenced his regular work of preaching. The first to recognise his talents and bring him into

[1] "Nouvelle Biographie," vol. vii. p. 53.

public notice was la Grande Mademoiselle, the grand-daughter of Henry IV.

In 1669[1] he was summoned to Paris. It has been called the most splendid year of the reign of the great monarch. The public mind was occupied with the triumphs of Turenne, the royal progress[2] and ostentatious invasion of Franche Comté, the growing influence of Madame de Montespan, the last play of Racine, or the secret treaty with England. But at a moment when war, politics, intrigues, and letters were supplying their piquant or startling subjects of conversation, the Jesuit preacher who had appeared at the Church of St. Louis divided with warriors, politicians, and mistresses the gossip at Versailles. Madame de Sevigné wrote of Father Bourdaloue who "preached divinely at the Tuileries;" and the king himself declared that he would rather listen to his old sermons than to the novelties of other preachers. Gay and extravagant courtiers,

[1] Migne, "Nouvelle Encyclopédie Théologique," says it was 1670.

[2] Voltaire, "Siècle de Louis XIV," p. [illegible]

men of the world, of loose morals and reckless habits, habitual gamblers, so enslaved by the love of play that they would "stake a year's income on a card,"[1] were yet drawn from their fascinating pleasures to listen to the austere Jesuit, who proved to them with inexorable and unflinching logic how fatal must be the end of their frivolous amusements and impure lives.[2]

And what are the qualities of this preacher, who thus attracts and engrosses the attention of all Paris? Let us take our place in the thronged aisles of the church, and push our way through a crowd of Court ladies, ambassadors, prelates, and generals. There, surrounded by a bevy of fair women and flatterers, is the king himself, to whom the incense of adulation[3] has been offered from day to day, till, confused by his overweening pride, he believes himself an invincible hero, an inspiring Muse, a very demigod on the throne. At his feet, with sad and wistful eyes

[1] Sismondi, vol. xxv. p. 182.
[2] See his Sermon "Sur l'Impureté."
[3] See Michelet, tom. xiii. p. 117.

fixed upon the man she so devotedly loved, is Madame de la Vallière, while her heart tells her that the king's preference is even now turning towards the more showy beauty and artful manners of Madame de Montespan, who sits close at hand. Not far distant, in good temper with himself and with his sovereign, adorned with the tokens of his triumphs, and rendered conspicuous by the comfortable breadth which increasing years have given him, is Turenne; near, a knot of young officers are conversing with his rival, the hero of the Fronde, the conqueror of Rocroi, the great Condé, who had spent thirteen months in captivity, and who, as he said, "had gone in the most innocent and had come out the most guilty of men." Presently the hum of conversation is hushed. "Silence, messieurs," exclaims Condé; "voici l'ennemi."[1] The preacher has ascended the pulpit. He shuffles out his manuscript from under his robe, and places it beside him; faces his audience, closes his eyes,[2] repeats some thirty or forty words

[1] "Étude sur Massillon," par l'Abbé Bayle, p. 66.

[2] See Fénélon on "Eloquence," pp. 87, 90, 93, Stevenson's translation, 1760.

in one key, and then drops his voice, which is naturally sonorous and musical, upon one note, which he never changes throughout the whole of his discourse. Occasionally he will unclose his eyes, but it is to glance at his manuscript, not to look at his hearers: with this he hurries on through his sermon with uninterrupted flow, never varying the monotony of his voice; when he touches on a more important thought, he will quicken his utterance; and all through his discourse he accompanies his rapid torrent of unvarying toned words with impetuous and unsuitable gestures and movements of his arms. Yet, repulsive and ridiculous as are the manner and elocution of the preacher, the audience are enchained; they have forgotten the man, his monotonous voice and his violent gesticulations; they are listening to his words. Rapidly as a skilful general he has brought out his forces; he has occupied one after another the strongholds where sin and self-complacency have entrenched themselves. Impassioned, relentless, cogently reasoned, the discourse moves on, and paragraph by paragraph the

listener knows that the "enemy" preacher is drawing his lines closer and closer round conscience and heart. The auditor feels that it is useless to fight any longer against conviction. "Mon Dieu! il a raison!"[1] cries De Gramont, and though the exclamation interrupts the sermon, the Jesuit's victory is complete.

Such was the man who produced a deeper impression upon Parisian society than had been wrought by the brilliant oratory, lofty flights, and sublime apostrophes of Bossuet. Madame de Sevigné, though complaining that the preacher makes too pointed personal allusions in his sermons, yet on hearing him declared, "Never has she heard anything more beautiful, more noble, or more amazing;" and elsewhere she wrote, "[illegible] he exceeds all former marvels, and that is, she has preached till now."[2]

But success in brilliant oratory, combined with pride-nurturing zeal in God, the Church, and

[1] "[illegible]"
[2] "[illegible]"

earnest character of Bourdaloue. Though at times he condescends to the flattering tone of the age, he was not afraid to speak frankly to the king. There was a time when many of the better thinking were rejoiced to notice symptoms of a more earnest religious disposition in the king. He resolved to separate from him the companions of his sin. "Mon père," said Louis, "you ought to be well pleased with me. Madame de Montespan is at Clugny." "Yes, sire," rejoined Bourdaloue, "but God would be better pleased if Clugny were seventy miles from Versailles."

Nor did his ascendency in the world of rank and fashion make him averse to humbler ministrations: as readily and as earnestly did he undertake to preach in convent or hospital or prison as at the Tuileries or Versailles. Among the sick and secluded he loved to work; and to these he turned when failing years and decreasing strength robbed him of the full vigour of his preaching powers. Among these he spent his declining years, and by his exertions among these he hastened his death. When unwell, he had been asked

to preach, and, not liking to refuse, he had made a great effort to do so. Something like his old energy seemed to have returned; but the effort was too great; he was taken ill, and never preached again.

Few death-beds reveal more terribly the painful results of the hard, heart-cramping, hope-killing system in which he had been trained, than does that of Bourdaloue. In strange contrast to the triumph in divine love which marked the dying hours of St. Chrysostom, the unshaken loyalty to the last of St. Jerome, the patient submission and trust of Bossuet, is the gloomy resignation of Bourdaloue to the rough guidance of a harsh, unlovely, and unevangelical theology. "My God, I have abused my life: I deserve that Thou shouldst hate me. . . . I resign myself to the pains of purgatory. There I shall suffer, but I shall suffer with love. It is needful that *God should be satisfied.*"

Let us drop the curtain over that death-bed in 1704, and turn to the more grateful task of surveying the chief elements which contributed to the marvellous success of the

more noble and self-denying life which preceded it.

Bourdaloue, as I have said, was emphatically a *preacher*, and as a preacher he labours to instruct and to convince. In these two objects he is pre-eminently successful; and if success in these two points were all that ought to be required of sacred orators, unquestionably Bourdaloue might take the place which has been claimed for him by his admirers, of being the greatest orator of the French Church.[1] But it is always the habit of the admirer injudiciously to exalt his hero by comparison with others. If the admirers of Bourdaloue had been content with claiming for him precedence as the best sermon-maker of the three great French preachers, few perhaps would have quarrelled with their position. "The happy art of disposing or arranging his arguments in that order which Quintilian compared to the skill of a general, a logic exact and powerful, a simplicity of

[1] "All things considered, the first place belongs to Bourdaloue," wrote the Abbé Trublet. (See Migne's "Encyclopédie Théologique," tom, i. p. 674.)

style, and a happy use of Scripture;" these were the qualities which led the Abbé Maury to exclaim, "To such a pitch of excellence can human genius attain when supported by hard work." It is to this power of arrangement, by which he opens the text, and step by step brings it home to the audience, that he owes his reputation of being the "creator of the eloquence of the pulpit;" but to a man so deficient in the natural gifts of the speaker, of so faulty a memory as to be obliged to close his eyes to enable him to recall his discourse, without grace of manner, charm of voice, powers of imagination, to one who never forsook the path of close reasoning to stir the feelings or to persuade the heart, we might hesitate to give the name of *orator.* This, however, is no censure. If Bourdaloue faile d inthe persuasive part of the orator's art, it was not because he lacked that earnestness of conviction which is essential for him who would persuade others, but because, on deliberate consideration, he had adopted another method. He speaks and preaches as one who scorns to take possession of the

heart while the judgment is unconvinced. According to him, judgment was stronger than sentiment, and from its conviction he looked for results which, if not more immediate, were yet more reasonable and more lasting.[1] It may be questioned whether he did not carry his method to an extreme, and "content himself with producing conviction where some persuasion was to be desired;"[2] but few will dissent from the remark of La Harpe, that the power of thought and reasoning possessed by Bourdaloue is no less rare than that of attracting and moving which distinguished Massillon.[3] This rare quality renders Bourdaloue more useful to after generations. The fervour of the moment, the circumstances which gave emphasis to a happy phrase or sentence, have passed, and with them much of the force and fragrance have faded out of the orations of Bossuet and Massillon; but though years have passed, the

[1] Tarrou, p. 39. "Étude sur Bourdaloue," a careful and useful, though in some respects crude, attempt to give an analysis of Bourdaloue's powers.

[2] Ibid. p. 44.

[3] Migne, "Nouvelle Encyclopédie Théologique," p. 676.

main merit of Bourdaloue's sermons continues. We can still follow the great master as he moves with resistless power from point to point—still we can read that "style more nervous than flowery, destitute of imagination, in which he sought more to convince than to touch;"[1] still we trace the tokens of that profound study by which he prepared himself for his calling, and the indications of that "lively and piercing genius"[2] which so well knew how to manipulate his materials, and to bring them forth in clearness, strength, and harmony; still we can hear his voice crying in the ears of a voluptuous king and a sensual court, that impurity, more than any other sin, impoverished the soul, entangled man in disastrous disorders, and brought him under the power of the wicked one.[3]

The sermons of Bourdaloue will well repay study. From their careful arrangement and well-graduated order of reasoning they cannot fail to afford many useful hints to those who

[1] Voltaire, "Siècle de Louis XIV." p. 393.
[2] Moroni, "Diz. Eccles." art. "Bourdaloue."
[3] Sermon "Sur l'Impureté."

read them with fitting attention and motive. I have referred to his "Sermon on Impurity." Of his others, the "Sermon on the Lord's Passion" (first part), in which he proves that the death of the Son of God is the triumph of power, has been declared to be the masterpiece of the pulpit. The sermons on "The Power and Holiness of the Christian Law," and "The Wisdom and Sweetness of that Law," might be read with advantage. They have been many of them translated into English. A hundred years ago a book in four volumes, entitled "Practical Divinity," presented to English readers a selection of Bourdaloue's sermons. In 1816 a volume of sermons, partly imitated and partly translated by W. Parnell, appeared. Still more recently, 1855, "Sermons and Moral Discourses on the Important Duties of Christianity," translated by A. Carroll, were published in Dublin. The "Sermon on the Passion" has been translated in "Fish's History and Repository of Sacred Eloquence," New York.

XIII.

MASSILLON.

"By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace."

XIII.

A FEW miles from the southern coast of France there is a range of hills which divides a country of comparatively limited produce from a district of luxuriant fertility. The hills once passed, the traveller finds himself in an amphitheatre facing the sea and crowded with rich and prodigal growth; the slopes are covered with the cypress, the olive, and the laurel; above, the rock breaks out into rugged and bold outline;[1] below, the valley is adorned with flowers; around are vast forests of pine. Situated on the slope, and commanding a view of the valley and of the Mediterranean, like another Jericho, rich in its lofty palm trees and its sheltering hills, is the town of Hyères. In one of the narrow, steep, and winding streets

[1] "Hyères et sa Vallée," par M. A. Aujauvre.

of the town — the Rue Rabaton — stands a modest and ancient house, little changed in outward appearance during two centuries, and bearing on its walls a tablet which proclaims it to be the birthplace of Massillon.

Massillon's father does not appear to have occupied any very important position in the town.[1] It is the son, Jean Baptiste, born in 1663, who has immortalised the family name. At the age of seventeen his training was committed to the care of the Oratorians. His superiors formed high expectations of his future. "Massillon alone," says D'Alembert, his biographer, "did not foresee the celebrity which awaited him." But he early felt the impulse of his calling. Just as Correggio, contemplating the masterpieces of Raphael, felt himself a painter; as La Fontaine, reading an ode of Malherbe, felt himself a poet; so young Massillon, reading the sermons of Père le Jeune, felt himself a preacher. With this feeling there came that dread of conscious power which is the almost

[1] D'Alembert calls him "a poor citizen;" according to others he was a notary.

invariable accompaniment of great abilities, and this noble-minded dread soon ripened into a holy awe. There was an evil he feared more than failure or the criticism of men. He feared, as he expressed it, the demon of pride. It is a very little demon, but it has a mighty power, and a soft and insinuating voice, with which it pours poison into the ears of men. Massillon knew its voice. "You have preached well," said a friend. "The devil has already told me so more eloquently than you," was his reply. He feared that voice, and this fear led him to seek retirement when the first murmur of his rising reputation was heard. He went to the Abbey of Septfons, and took the habit.

But his abilities were not to be buried. At the bidding of the Cardinal de Noailles he emerged into public life. He appeared in Paris. His conferences at St. Magloire in 1696 attracted public attention. A Lenten course, preached at the Church of the Oratoire, in the Rue St. Honoré, drew crowds to hear him. Among his hearers was his illustrious predecessor in the French pulpit.

Bourdaloue, now in the decline of his years, listens with unselfish gladness and generous admiration to this new star. With downcast eyes, without movement or gesture, the preacher begins his sermon, speaking simply "like a child, but like a child convinced and inspired.[1] As he enlarges on his subject he raises his head; his face glows with emotion; voice, glance, and gesture come to aid in the interpretation of his thoughts. "He must increase, but I must decrease," were the words in which Bourdaloue recognised his successor's powers. The opinion formed by Bossuet, on hearing him preach at Versailles, was not so favourable. He admired his grace of elocution and his voice, but considered him an orator far from sublime, and incapable of reaching it.[2]

When Massillon's rising fame led to his being summoned to preach before the king, Louis XIV. was no longer in the zenith of his power. The old taste for display and

[1] "Biographie de Massillon," par M. Jules Janin. (See "Hyères et sa Vallée.")

[2] "Nouvelle Biographie," tom. 34, p. 195.

profuse magnificence still prevailed, but an air of gravity pervaded the Court; the fashions were of a severer character; loose manners and voluptuous gaiety had given way to an affectation of decorum and even of religiousness. Madame de Maintenon had succeeded Madame de Montespan. The age, too, of great genius was fast passing away; Molière had left the scene among the earliest; Corneille had been dead fifteen years; Racine, wearied with dearly bought fame and wounded with disappointment, had just closed his career; Boileau had retired to his garden; the genius of Colbert had left no successor; the age of Turenne and Condé was over; the Peace of Ryswick told the story of declining ascendency in Europe.[1] But the spirit of flattery was not extinct. The king had been long accustomed to the crooked knees of courtly knaves and the extravagant flatteries of ignoble preachers. The vicious atmosphere had depraved even the purest natures, and the noblest eloquence had been degraded by coarse and unvarnished

[1] See "Étude sur Massillon," par l'Abbé Bayle. Paris, 1867.

compliment. Many succumbed to its influence: even Bourdaloue was hardly free from it; and Bossuet could stoop to use to the king's face such language as the following: "We have seen a king enjoying the succour of heaven, and making use of great generals: and being deprived of one by death and of the other by his maladies, conceiving the greatest plans and performing the noblest deeds, rising above the hopes of his friends and the expectations of the world: so lofty his courage, so vast his intelligence, so glorious his destiny."

"I shall not preach like them," Massillon had said in his young days, when he had been listening to the preachers of Paris. He kept his word. In style he differed from them; in his high and independent tone he was above them.[1] The man flattered by the world was not flattered by him. "Blessed are they that mourn." "Sire," said the preacher, addressing a monarch to whom

[1] Sismondi ("Histoire," tom. xxv. p. 485, note), speaking of the flattering tone of French preachers, makes an exception in favour of Massillon.

most prophets had prophesied smooth things —"sire, if the world were to speak to you in the place of Jesus Christ, it undoubtedly would not say, 'Blessed are they that mourn.' 'Happy,' would it say, 'the prince who has never fought but to conquer, and whose mind has always been superior either to the danger or to the victory; who, during the course of a long and prosperous reign, has enjoyed, and still continues to enjoy at his ease, the fruits of his glory, the love of his people, the esteem of his enemies, the advantage of his conquests, the splendour of his actions, the wisdom of his laws, and the august prospect of a numerous posterity; who has nothing left now to desire but the continuance of what he possesses.' In this manner would the world speak; but, sire, Jesus Christ does not speak like the world. 'Happy,' says He to you, 'not he who is the admiration of his age, but he who makes his study of the age to come, and lives in the contempt of himself and of all the things of the earth; for to him is the kingdom of heaven. Not he to whom men have given the pompous titles of "great"

and "invincible;" but he to whom the wretched shall give, before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, the title of "father" and of "merciful," for he shall be treated with mercy. Lastly, happy, not he who, always disposer of the lot of his enemies, has more than once given peace to the earth, but he who has been able to give it to himself, and to banish from his heart all the vices and disorderly inclinations which disturb its tranquillity, for he shall be called a child of God.' Such, sire, are those whom Jesus Christ calls happy; and the gospel acknowledges no other happiness on the earth than innocence and virtue. Great God! it is not, then, that long train of unexampled prosperities with which Thou hast favoured the glory of his reign that can render him the happiest of kings. He is thereby great, but he is not thereby happy. His felicity has commenced with his piety. Whatever does not sanctify man can never make the happiness of man. Whatever does not please Thee, O my God! in a heart, places only vanities which leave it empty, or real evil which fills it with disquiet; and a

pure conscience is the only resource of real enjoyments."[1]

It is said that the audience, struck with admiration at language at once so courteous and so bold, could not refrain from an expression of wonder. It was this firm bearing and frank spokenness which won for Massillon the truest testimony to his merits and fidelity. "When I hear other preachers," said the king, "I am well pleased with them; but when I hear you, I go away displeased with myself."[2] Far more eloquent than the loftiest panegyric is the acknowledgment that the sermon has reached the mark. Ingenuity, fancy, literary culture, shrewd wit, or close logic may obtain admiration and applause; moral earnestness and unflinching fidelity to truth have a better reward; the tears, not the cheers, of men, are their recompense.

More astonishing, if less really satisfactory, was the deep terror aroused by his sermon on "The Small Number of the Saved." As the

[1] Sermon on "The Happiness of the Just."

[2] These words of Louis XIV. are inscribed on the mural tablet which marks the house where Massillon was born.

preacher pictured the opening heavens and the Saviour in His glory, and asked whether the greater part of his hearers would be found at the right hand—"would even one half—would ten righteous be found?"—so intensely did the people seem to realise the scene, that they leaped to their feet, and even the king was agitated, as though the hour of judgment was about to sound,[1] and for a while the orator himself paused with his head in his hands, silent, scarce daring to continue.

Hardly less effect was produced by the opening words of his funeral sermon on Louis XIV. Entering the pulpit, he surveyed for a few moments the church draped in black, adorned with the vain tokens of kingly pomp and human greatness, and crowded with people clad in mourning, and then exclaimed, "God alone is great!"—a truth so great, so simple, so often forgotten in the foolish pursuit of honours and titles, proclaimed amid so many tokens of the vanity of earthly grandeur, thrilled the whole assemblage.

After the death of Louis XIV. the Regent

[1] M. Jules Janin.

invited Massillon to preach a Lenten course before the young king, then only nine years of age. These sermons, "Le Petit Carême," are considered by D'Alembert as the true model of pulpit eloquence, worthy of being studied by all destined to the throne, and meditated on by all men entrusted with the government of the world. He was appointed by the Regent to the bishopric of Clermont, and his time thenceforward was mainly devoted to his diocese, where his self-forgetfulness, zeal, liberality, and tenderness won for him, more than his eloquence could ever win, the reverent affection of his people.

He died in the autumn of 1742, "without money, and without debts."

"Massillon," it has been said, "closed the series of the illustrious men of a great era."[1] Before he died another and a far different era had already dawned. No longer Bossuet or Fénélon, Saurin, Claude, or Bourdaloue are the instructors of the people. Voltaire has become the preacher of the day; but side by

[1] "Étude sur Massillon," par M. R. Labeille. Strasbourg, 1857.

side upon his table are the tragedies of Racine and the sermons of Massillon.[1] These last he knows by heart. It is a high tribute to the literary merit of one whose position as a preacher has been very diversely estimated. According to some, his reputation is beyond his merits; according to others, he is the greatest of pulpit orators. One thing, however, seems very generally allowed. He is admitted to take his place as one of the three worthies of the French pulpit, and to stand with Bossuet and Bourdaloue, as Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah did among the heroes of David, pre-eminent among Gallican preachers. The youngest in that triumvirate, he follows a path which his predecessors left open. He does not, like Bossuet, address the imagination, or, like Bourdaloue, seek to convince the understanding, but he appeals to the heart.[2] He strives to unveil man's heart to man.[3] In the spiritual warfare Bossuet

[1] D'Alembert.

[2] Abbé Maury. La Harpe gives Massillon preference to Bourdaloue. See also Rohrbacher, "Histoire Universelle de l'Église Catholique," tom. xiv. p. 1428.

[3] "Massillon will zum Herzen reden; er will die Vorgänge

loves to take the city by assault; Bourdaloue prefers the slower and safer method of a siege, patiently and gradually approaching his lines to the walls; Massillon invites to a willing surrender by expostulation and entreaty, blended with arguments addressed to the sentiments and the heart. For this style his character, so simple[1] and straightforward, was eminently fitted. He does not care to encumber his sermons with lengthy or pedantic citations from profane writers or even Christian fathers, or to waste his time by ingenious applications of Scripture texts. He relies upon the force of simple truths preached simply. "He was persuaded that it was to the Holy Scriptures that sacred eloquence ought to owe its power."[2] Without the vast erudition and magnificent apostrophes of Bossuet, or the careful and cautious logic of Bourdaloue, he possessed more than either

im Herzen und im Leben der Menschen beschreiben."—Dr. F. Theremin, "Demosthenes und Massillon," p. 346. Berlin. ——"Tutti i suoi ragionamenti toccano diretamente il cuore."—Moroni, "Diz. Ecc." (Cf. Labeille, p. 12.)

[1] Guettée, "Histoire de l'Eglise de France."

[2] Abbé Bayle, p. 37.

the "pectus quod facit orator;"[1] and this, joined with a simple desire to persuade, led to the exclamation, "This man is an orator, and we are but players." It may have been the sense of this which induced one French writer,[2] in comparing the three French orators with yet more illustrious names in the early Church, to call Massillon the French Chrysostom. "Why should not Bossuet be our St. Augustine, Massillon our St. Chrysostom, Bourdaloue our St. Basil?"

Simple, earnest, direct, fearing the snares of pride and heedless of the bribes of ambition, he was the evangelist of the latter days of Le Grand Monarque. In the dawn of his dazzling reign he had heard the voice of Bossuet calling him from the vanity of earthly pomps; in his noontide the inexorable logic of Bourdaloue displayed the awful end of a life of self-indulgence and impiety; in its eventide the silvery voice and persuasive tones of Massillon pleaded with him, speaking of

[1] Labeille, p. 50.

[2] M. Sylvestre de Sacy, "Sermons Choisis de Bossuet," &c. Preface.

the happiness of the just, the joys of heaven, and of the few who were saved.

The man who thus pleaded prayed as well as preached, and earnestly urged on all who had charge of souls to do the same. His words may fitly point one lesson of his life: "A pastor who does not pray, and who does not love prayer, belongs no longer to the Church, which prays without ceasing. He is as a tree dry and barren, encumbering the fields of God."[1]

Among his sermons, that on "The Small Number of the Saved" has been frequently translated; that on "The Happiness of the Just" has been alluded to. Others commended as worthy of study are those on "True Worship," "Death and the Immortality of the Soul," "The Necessity of Penitence," "The Importance of Salvation."

[1] Cf. Bayle, p. 407.

XIV.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

"Christe's lore and His apostles twelve
He taught; but first he followed it himselve."

CHAUCER.

evangelistic efforts. His memory is cherished in every English heart; the Church, who closed her doors to him in life, has opened her great Pantheon to receive his monument, and one of her most distinguished sons has pronounced his eulogy. All this has sprung from that day when John Wesley decided for God, and not "for self, or the devil." The book he read that day was a book written in the dark and tumultuous days of an exile's life. It was "The Holy Living," by Jeremy Taylor. Had the author only written that book, his life would not have been spent in vain; but Jeremy Taylor, though most widely known by the present generation as the author of his "Holy Living and Dying," exerted an influence as a preacher during his life, only second to that which he has exercised as a writer since his death.

A hundred years before the Wesleys began their work, a certain Mr. Risden held the post of Lecturer at St. Paul's Cathedral. Being unable to fulfil his duties at one time, he invited a college friend, a young fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, to occupy his

place. The substitute who appeared soon attracted general attention; the congregation increased till crowds gathered round the pulpit of Old St. Paul's to hear him. Nor can we wonder at their eagerness. Eminently youthful in appearance,—he is only twenty years of age,—yet possessing a form of manly build, singularly beautiful features, a strange music in his voice and wondrous cadence in his sentences, he cast a spell, like one of the bards of old, over his hearers, who listened to one so young and so fair that he seemed to them an angel.

The name of this youthful preacher is Jeremy Taylor. He is the son of a barber in Cambridge, and all his earliest associations have been formed in the midst of the colleges and buildings of the University of which he was one of the most distinguished sons. When a little child, a sturdy Huntingdonshire youth, Oliver Cromwell by name, making his way to Sidney Sussex College, may have glanced upon him as he stood at his father's shop door. As a lad passing to and fro between his father's place of business and the

Perse Grammar School, where he was educated, the old halls and chapels were well-known objects, and faces of residents and students must have grown familiar. At the gates of Christ's College, or resting under the shadow of a mulberry tree in its gardens, he may have marked the fair, girlish-looking face of a student, whose voice, "majestic as the sea," was afterwards to sing of Paradise, or to rouse the free heart of England with its mighty tones. Later, the serene face of the saintly George Herbert, "whose business in the world was most with God," may have smiled upon him then entered as a sizar of Caius College. His college course over, the sizar has become a fellow of his college, and before he has completed his twenty-first year he has been received into holy orders, and proved his abilities by the success of his sermons at St. Paul's. The rumour of his powers, and of the influence he was beginning to exert in the City, reached the Primate at Lambeth. Laud, on hearing him preach, felt wonder at the sermon; "it was beyond exception and beyond imitation."

In making the acquaintance of Laud, Jeremy Taylor found more than a patron; he found a wise counsellor. As, some few years later, Mgr. Cospean advised Bossuet to devote himself to study, instead of wasting his youthhood in premature preaching, so Laud felt that the young English divine would lay the foundation of wider and more enduring usefulness by storing his mind with knowledge, instead of astonishing the citizens of London by precocious ability. He admired the sermon, but he thought the preacher too young; but, says Rust, "the great youth humbly begged his grace to pardon that fault, and promised, if he lived, he would mend it." And he did mend the fault of his inexperience by using well the opportunity of study which Laud was the means of giving him. His fellowship at Caius College seems to have been comparatively unremunerative: but through the influence of the Archbishop, Jeremy Taylor was elected to a fellowship at All Soul's, Oxford, where he had the command of sufficient means and leisure to pursue his studies. Of his persevering diligence in

reading, his writings bear witness, decorated as they are with quotations, references, and allusions. After a residence of upwards of a year at Oxford he was presented to the Rectory of Uppingham, then a thinly peopled market town, but described by Evelyn as pretty, and well built of stone, "which is a rarity in that part of England." Here he spent a few quiet and happy years. He married, and his loving disposition was soon rejoicing in the childish prattle which was heard in the rectory. "No man can tell, but he that loves his children, how many delicious accents make a man's heart dance in the pretty conversation of these dear pledges." But these quiet times, the only really undisturbed years of his life, passed quick as a sunbeam. The clouds which had been long gathering now broke into a storm. As early as the time in which Taylor went to Oxford the mutterings of the long-threatened tempest had been heard with ominous distinctness. In that year a gentleman of Buckinghamshire had refused to pay ship money, and almost the whole county had

followed his example. Since then the contest had grown more bitter; swords were taking the place of words. Besides the clamour of war without, dark shadows fell upon the rectory home. In the same year that the Royal Standard was raised at Nottingham, Taylor saw death twice enter his house. His youngest son was the first to go; his wife soon followed. Hardly had he laid his loved ones in the grave before his home was invaded by the plunderers. His house was pillaged, his estate seized, and his family turned out of doors.

Thenceforward for eighteen years he was an exile, following at first the fortunes of his royal master, afterwards endeavouring to support himself in the wild parts of Wales by teaching, now succoured by the courtesies of friends or the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy—now in prison, now far from the scene of turmoil and war, on the banks of Lough Neagh, now stealing up to London and ministering to congregations of Episcopalians, now pouring forth the wealth of his learning, imagination, and piety for the

benefit of the little flock that met, under the protection of Lord Carberry, at Golden Grove. His years of exile and vicissitude were not years of idleness. He published a grammar. He contributed to the controversies of the day his famous "Liberty of Prophesying," a book which Professor Craik does not hesitate to say "did for liberty of conscience what Milton's 'Areopagitica' did for the liberty of the press." He enriched devotional literature with the "Holy Living and Holy Dying." He stirred the theological world by a treatise on Repentance, and slowly elaborated his "Ductor Dubitantium." Such were his occupations during that twilight-time before the day of restored fortune broke upon him. In a sense different from Taylor's own we may use his words: "Twilight is a great blessing to mankind; for, should our eyes be instantly posted out of darkness into light, out of midnight into morning, so sudden a surprisal would blind us. God, therefore, of His goodness, will make the intermediate twilight to prepare our eyes for the reception of the light." The

twilight season, so well used by Taylor, and to which our Church owed his richest contributions, was drawing to an end. The same year in which the "Ductor Dubitantium" was issued from the press, the frost-time of Puritanism ended, and the people awoke like nature in the spring. The ways were strewn with flowers, the bells were set ringing, streets and houses were hung with tapestry, fountains ran with wine, the nation's fancy lightly turned to love; the upturned eyes of the pietist disappeared, and the languishing glances of royal courtesans took their place: for Charles Stuart was at Whitehall. The Restoration, which brought danger to the author of the "Areopagitica," brought preferment to the author of the "Liberty of Prophesying." But the promotion was in many respects little more than an extension of exile; when King Charles dispensed the vacant mitres Taylor was nominated to the see of Down and Connor. Zealous, hospitable, and devout, he administered the affairs of his diocese with liberality and perseverance; but the six years of his episcopate

were shadowed by controversy, opposition, and bereavement. To this period we owe his "Dissuasive from Popery." Death came into his home: his eldest son perished in a duel, and another shortly afterwards died of decline. Then came sickness upon the father, and then death did but "untie the soul from its chain and let it go forth, first into liberty and then to glory." He died at Lisburn, on the 13th of August, 1667.

Jeremy Taylor has been more than once termed the English Chrysostom. I cannot think the title well chosen. The epithet golden-mouthed might indeed apply to one who poured forth so rich and varied a flow of learning, imagery, and eloquence; but the oratory of St. Chrysostom and the eloquence of Taylor belong to a different order. Even if it indeed be true that, as has been said, we may find in a few pages of Taylor more rational piety and more true eloquence than in all the fathers of the Church, it may be fairly questioned whether the richly ornamented and poetical sermons of Taylor could have availed to have rescued Eutropius.

Far happier is the comparison which would make him a Fénélon among English divines. "Both had the same tender heart and flowery imagination, the same tolerant spirit."[1] His luxuriant fancy runs riot, however, where the preciser taste of the Frenchman would have pruned remorselessly; but his profuseness is that of nature. "In abundance of thought, in ingenuity of argument, in opulence of imagination, in a soul made alike for the feeling of the sublime, of the beautiful, and of the picturesque, and in a style answering in its compass, flexibility, and sweetness to the demands of all powers, Taylor is unrivalled by any of the masters of English eloquence. He is the Spenser of our prose writers, and his prose is sometimes almost as musical as Spenser's verse."[2] The reader of Jeremy Taylor will be more disposed to agree with Professor Craik than with Hallam, who, while admitting Taylor's pre-eminence among contemporary divines, complains of his "altogether unmusical sentences,"[3] when he re-

[1] "Edinburgh Review," No. liii. p. 344.
[2] Professor Craik, "English Literature," vol. ii. p. 64.
[3] Hallam, "Literature of Europe," vol. ii. p. 360.

members passages like the following, the close of which reads, as a writer in the "Edinburgh Review" has said, like a song: "If the blessed martyrs and confessors were asked concerning their past sufferings and their present rest, and the joys of their certain expectation, you should hear them glory in nothing but in the mercies of God and in the cross of Jesus Christ. Every chain is a ray of light, and every prison is a palace, and every loss is the purchase of a kingdom, and every affront in the cause of God is an eternal honour, and every day of sorrow is a thousand years of comfort multiplied with a never-ceasing enumeration—days without night, joys without sorrow, sanctity without sin, charity without stain, possession without fear, society without envying, communication of joys without lessening. And they shall dwell in a blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and from whence a friend never went away."

Whether we can assign him the place of the Prince of English divines or otherwise, we shall always feel for him an affection

which we can only extend to few. His personal character, his unfeigned piety, the depth and loftiness of his devotional feeling, have endeared him to the hearts of thousands who cannot give the assent of their understanding to much of his teaching, but who would heartily subscribe to the eloquent tribute of one whom we might not inaptly term the Taylor of the nineteenth century. When comparing Hooker, Barrow, and Taylor, he says "that in imagination and intellect, in that which more properly and exclusively deserves the name of genius, Taylor is to be placed before either. The first awes most, the second convinces most, the third persuades and delights most; Hooker is the object of our reverence, Barrow of our admiration, and Jeremy Taylor of our love."

Of his sermons Hallam mentions with special approbation "The Marriage Ring," "House of Feasting," and "Apples of Sodom." To these may be added "The Foolish Exchange" and the Faith and Patience of the Saints."

XV.

CHALMERS.

"*Dentro vi nacque l'amoroso drudo*
Della fede Christiana, il santo atleta,
Benigno a' suoi ed a nimici crudo."

Paradiso, xii.

XV.

IN 1783 a simple Scottish household were assembled at family worship. The family was a large one; and the father was reading with a strong Scotch accent the touching story of the day when a glorious victory was turned into mourning, and the king went weeping the death of his rebellious, but much-loved son. Listening with a half-abstracted air and dreamy-looking eye was a little curly-headed boy of three years of age. When the homely service was over, the little boy slipped away, and shortly afterwards was found pacing to and fro, exclaiming over and over again, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son." That voice, grown strong with manhood, was destined never to lose its passionate sympathy with sorrow and distress.

The child was the sixth son of a moderately prosperous tenant of Lasswade. He was sent out with his older brothers to school where he was many a smaller boy since to note the moral-based muscular air he is his protector against bullies: it is said that in the school that Thomas Chalmers would always defend the weak against the strong. The child was the father of the man in this case. His course of action in the two universes of 1841 and 1843 was but the natural sequel of his schoolboy championship. When he takes sides it must be with those whom he thinks the oppressed whether belonging to his own kirk or another communion.

From his twelfth till his nineteenth year he was a student in St. Andrews where he was known as not very industrious but as man and specially apt in mathematical studies. Dr. Chapel and Dr. Leslie were his antagonists and with them he was a member of a theological society: but his real vein is in mathematics and natural philosophy. So marked were his attain-

ments that in 1802, when only twenty-one years of age, we find him assisting Professor Vilant in his mathematical lectures. Two years later his passionate love of scientific pursuits brought him from his parish of Kilmany to St. Andrews, a distance of nine miles, to conduct mathematical and chemistry classes. But in his eagerness for such secular studies he had "forgotten two magnitudes—the littleness of time and the greatness of eternity." The vastness of the disproportion between these magnitudes was soon to be made clear to him.

A range of hills skirts the southern shores of the Firth of Tay. Protected by this mountain bulwark from the cold northern winds lies the little valley of Kilmany, the northernmost of the Fifeshire valleys. Snugly placed, surrounded by a grove of trees—the plane, the elm, and the ash—are the few houses which form the hamlet of Kilmany. All around, the rising sides of the adjacent hills are well cultivated from base to summit, while the lower slopes are adorned with pretty cottages and comfortable

[illegible] This rural and picturesque spot was the scene of Chalmers's first settled labour: it was more—he would have called it his spiritual nursing place. In the midst of his ardent toil, when his mind was more intent upon his mathematical lectures at St. Andrews than on his little church of the valley,[1] death roused him to look time and eternity in the face, and weigh their relative importance. It chanced his favourite sister Barbara died. Shortly after an uncle, an old master in the navy, was found dead in the attitude of prayer. Then came his own serious illness, and with it retrospect, self-examination, and dissatisfaction with his life and his heart. A new impulse was communicated to his mind. Like the patriarch, he is not planning now for triumph, for wrestling in a night agony for truth; yet not with hysterical ebullitions of emotion, but with earnest, sober, and sustained perseverance. He studied: he reviewed the foundations of the Christian

[1] Kilmany is said by Gaelic scholars to mean "Church of the Valley." See Dodds's "Biographical Study of Chalmers," p. [illegible], &c.

faith. The results of his survey were published under the head of "Christianity" in the "Edinburgh Encyclopædia," edited by Dr. Brewster. He entered on a course of private devotional reading. Wilberforce's "Practical View," Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," Hannah More's "Practical Piety," Pascal's "Pensées," and Young's "Night Thoughts," were among the works so read. But, most of all, the Bible was his daily companion. "I never come in now, sir," said old John Bonthron, "but I find you aye at your Bible." "All too little, John, all too little," was Chalmers' reply.

The end of these studies was a conviction of the irresistible strength of the evidences of the Christian faith, and an enthusiastic desire to diffuse it. He became himself an example of the expulsive power of a new affection. Then the minister of Kilmany saw the true magnitude of his parish work; a new spirit breathed in his words and actions; earnestness gave fresh eloquence to his ministrations; the light of the cross kindled his genius into life.

He became [illegible] afterwards in [illegible] and he [illegible] for some [illegible] became a [illegible] of [illegible] sympathy and [illegible] influence in the [illegible] [illegible].

For the [illegible] pastoral [illegible] of his life were [illegible] in [illegible]. In [illegible] he was summoned to take charge of the Tron Church, Glasgow. It was entering a new atmosphere to pass from the quiet simplicity of the Fife [illegible] into the busy swarming streets of the great [illegible] of Scottish commercial life. His windows in [illegible] looked out upon the [illegible] summit of Nature's Law, but upon the restless [illegible], poverty-stricken courts, and [illegible] population of a city of manufactures and merchants. But soon upon that dense crowd of human beings he made his influence felt. The aisles and seats of the Tron Church were thronged. His fame spread, and in the same spirit in which Bourdaloue recognised the powers of Massillon, Dr Andrew Thomson wrote to inquire about the rising star which was to eclipse its predecessors. The light from the new luminary was fast spreading. His astro-

nomical discourses, thought by some to be entitled to the foremost place among the efforts of Chalmers, were delivered in Glasgow on Thursdays, at an hour by no means the most convenient to business men; but "merchants and clerks deserted their desks, students in the college absented themselves from their classes, operatives quitted their looms, that they might listen to one who spoke so eloquently of the wonders of creation."[1] Glasgow beheld a repetition of the scenes enacted in Cæsarea when St. Basil delivered his "Hexæmeron."

He visited London. His fame had already preceded him. Wherever he preached, the doors were besieged with crowds waiting for admission. "All the world," wrote Wilberforce, "all the world is wild about Dr. Chalmers." Besides Wilberforce, Huskisson and Canning were among his hearers.

When he ascends the pulpit, there is nothing very striking in his appearance. His brow is broad, but his eye is heavy and lustreless; and as he commences his sermon,

[1] "Quarterly Review," vol. xci. p. 428.

there is something even to repel. His voice is harsh, and he follows the lines of his manuscript with his finger, as though fearful of losing his place, and he reads with a strong provincial accent, and accompanies his reading with an awkward gesture. But soon the strange accent and harsh voice are forgotten: the preacher has warmed to his work, and the hearers are too absorbed in listening to "that rushing tide of eloquence," as Canning called it, to take note of roughness of style or manner. Nay, the whole manner of the man has changed; all dulness and heaviness have passed away; the nervousness of the first moment has gone; the preacher is possessed by his subject; his heavy frame is agitated; his face is flushed; the veins on face and neck stand out like cords; foam gathers on his mouth; the voice peals, and the hand is clenched, as he pours forth his paragraphs, volley after volley, upon his audience. Though the sermon is read, it is, as the Fifeshire woman said, "fell readin'." It takes the audience by storm: Canning is moved: tears gather in the eyes

of the English statesman, as the Scotch preacher describes the Irish character. "The Tartan beats us all!" is his exclamation, as the congregation breaks up.

Later he visited Paris, and "Galignani's Messenger" urged all Christians of every sect and denomination not to lose the opportunity of hearing "this great man," and added, "High as is the celebrity of this eminent divine throughout England and Scotland, we think it rather under than above his genuine claims."

But his labours did not end with a brilliant pulpit success. His mind was practical, and his heart ever glowed with a wide philanthropy. He set himself to "revivify and remodel the old parochial economy of Scotland." In 1819 he became minister of St. John's Church, Glasgow. Here he organised, subdividing his parish into districts, established week-day and Sunday schools, besides devising schemes for a healthy and economical administration of parochial relief.

In the same year he refused to be nominated to the professorship of natural philosophy

in Edinburgh; but he felt that the call given him four years later to take the chair of moral philosophy at St. Andrews was one which, as a clergyman, he could in perfect consistency accept. But he was not content to be a mere professor. Zeal for foreign missions led him to form associations; his spirit infected others; the sober religionists feared his "fanaticism," but warm and loving souls responded to his own, and names, loved and known in mission fields, Nesbit, Ewart, Mackay, and the great Scottish evangelist to India, Dr. Duff, were among the fruits of his missionary association at St. Andrews.

Honours began to fall thick and fast upon him. In 1828 he was appointed Divinity Professor at Edinburgh. A few years later the Royal Society of Edinburgh chose him as a Fellow, and the Institute of France elected him a corresponding member. In 1835 the Sheldonian Theatre rang with the cheers of welcome with which young Oxford greeted the Presbyterian divine, whom elder Oxford thought worthy to honour with the degree of D.C.L. The warm imagination and simple

disposition of Chalmers was delighted with everything he saw. He peered into every stray corner or hidden nook of college halls and gardens: he wrote home describing his Doctor's hood and gown, and expressing his pleasure in his new acquaintances. Towards Keble he was particularly drawn. "The most interesting introduction which I have had in Oxford is to Keble the poet, author of the 'Christian Year,' a work of exquisite beauty and most worthy of your perusual; nay, of your daily companionship."

Later the troubles came. The jarring notes of controversy at first, then the angry debates between Evangelicals and Moderates, the remonstrance, and at last the disruption. "He led our Exodus," is the panegyric of one of his Free Kirk admirers. Thenceforth his life is spent in organising and raising funds for the new-formed kirk, and in discharging the duties of principal of the Free Church College.

Then came the end. The story has been often told of his last Sabbath on earth; his joining in worship at the kirk; his walk

home; his lonely walk in the garden, where his voice was heard exclaiming, "My Father, O my heavenly Father;" his cheery conversation in the evening; his tender "good night;" his gentle warning, "We must be early in the morning." Let them be astir as early as they will, the angels were stirring earlier; and when the sun looked into the room, the old man was found dead in his bed, reclining against his pillow—serene and happy-looking. It was the morning of May 31, 1847. On the 4th of June all Edinburgh turned out to carry him to his grave; city authorities, representatives of religious bodies, Sunday scholars, all were there. "There was a moral sublimity," wrote Hugh Miller, "in the spectacle. It spoke more emphatically than by words of the dignity of intrinsic excellence, and of the height to which a true man may attain. It was the dust of a Presbyterian minister which the coffin contained, and yet they were burying him amid the tears of a nation, and with more than kingly honours."

"I know not what it is, but there is some-

thing altogether remarkable about that man," said Lord Jeffrey, speaking of Chalmers. Something remarkable there was, and that was his intense earnestness. He spoke what he knew—he testified what he had seen. Such was the late Dean Ramsay's opinion: "The important element of his success as a preacher, I think, was the impression of earnest truth and sincere conviction existing in his mind." This inspired that fervour of manner, that persuasiveness of tone, which arrested the attention of his hearers. He had moreover something to say. He was an extensive reader, but whatever he read he made his own; he dealt out no hastily adopted or second-hand views selected at random to serve the shift of a Sunday sermon; but he preached as one who had a message from God to his hearers, and a message which he himself understood and longed to give. He was not an exact scholar, nor yet a very subtle thinker, but he had wide information, and a naturally argumentative mind, a rich imagination, keen sensibility, and indomitable energy; and these last were the

most useful qualities to him as a preacher. But he had more—he had a loving, guileless, and genial nature, and a heart which yearned for wider and fuller knowledge of God. If we would know Dr. Chalmers, we must see him not in the pulpit but in his own study, and there read his heart, as it goes out towards the Master he loved, as it longs to be faithful to Him, and full of broad sympathy with men. We must hear him pray for scrupulous fidelity to God, and a wide free heart towards man. "Deliver me from the narrowing influence of human lessons, and more especially of human systems of theology. Teach me directly out of the fulness and freeness of Thine own Word." And again, "Let Thy Bible, O God, be henceforward my supreme directory, nor let me ever incur the condemnation of those who either add to its words or take away from them."

Of his sermons it is difficult to say which should be recommended, when so many are worthy of perusual. There is, however, great inequality among them; but the sermons, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still,"

"If the righteous scarcely be saved," "Heaven a character, not a locality," "Life and immortality brought to light by the gospel," "The superior blessing of the giver," "On universal peace," besides the funeral sermon on Dr. A. Thomson—"He, being dead, yet speaketh"—have all received more or less commendation, and will repay attention.

XVI.

DEAN KIRWAN.

"Whose end . . . is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

XVI.

THE name of Kirwan takes us to Ireland, and to Ireland at that period which some of her sons, not altogether without reason, regard as the most attractive in her story. It is true that it was a period of tumult, of intrigue, of disaffection, of mistaken zeal, of much misguided policy and venal patriotism; but it was a period which brought to the front men of whom Ireland may still be proud. The senate and the bar were frequented by men whose ready wit, racy humour, easy fancy, and fervid eloquence have become proverbial. We might pass along the quays, and watch the groups as they gather under the shadow of the four courts. There is tall, burly, "Bully" Egan, swaggering along, but full of good-nature, or standing wigless in the open court to

"air his head." There is square-built, broad-browed Plunket, moving slowly, as if in thought. Now there mingles with the little knot Barry Yelverton, better known as Lord Avonmore: his eye is dreamy, and his manner so abstracted that Curran once included him in the toast of "an absent friend." Another joins the group—a spare, diminutive, untidy-looking man, with dark far-reaching eyes. It is Curran himself. Instantly mirth and fun stir the company. Egan's broad good-natured face broadens with laughter—Yelverton listens half-puzzled, till, the joke dawning upon him, he is convulsed with merriment; and even Plunket's grave face relaxes into a smile.

We may turn into Kevins Street, and take a peep at the quaint little society called "the monks of the screw," and emerging we might meet the good Lord Charlemont, arm in arm with Father O'Leary, a wit who closed a discussion on purgatory by telling his Protestant opponent that, though he objected to the doctrine, he "might go farther and fare worse."

Best of all, we may take our stand in College Green, and watch the members as they enter the House of Parliament. From the law courts come those we have already seen; but others are joining them or passing under the colonnade—Sir Boyle Roche who opposed a bill brought in to benefit posterity with the unanswerable argument, "What has posterity ever done for us?" Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare, and Flood, with his commanding figure. But these we must turn from to notice another, a man below the middle height, with a clear, sharp-cut, somewhat forbidding face, who comes striding along, and swaying to and fro his lengthy arms, as though lost in thought. We may look at him. He has been honoured in England: his keen face and gaunt figure, cut in marble, stand in St. Stephen's, among great and revered men, Somers, Fox, Burke; his dust lies in Westminster Abbey. He was worshipped in Ireland; and close to the old Parliament House, over whose expiring glory he shed the brightest ray, his statue, reared by a younger generation, tells us that

his countrymen have not yet forgotten Henry Grattan. The sculptor, an Irishman, has placed him in an attitude of hope: he stands, not looking as though in regret upon the building, once the house of legislature; his back is to the Bank, as though he hoped nothing from a resuscitated past; his face is towards the university, as though his hope for Ireland lay in the broadened sympathies, emancipated intellect, and freer education of her sons.

These and a host of other men form part of that society from which Dean Kirwan won unbounded applause, and drew forth in almost incredible sums the practical tokens of sympathy.

Walter Blake Kirwan was born in Galway, in the year 1754. He was therefore four years junior to Curran, and eight years younger than Grattan. His parents were Roman Catholics, and he was sent in early youth to be educated at the Jesuit College at St. Omer. In his eighteenth year he went to the West Indies; but in his twenty-fifth year he appeared at the British court as

chaplain to the Neapolitan embassy. Making use of the opportunities thus afforded him, he became a constant attendant at our law courts, and a listener to the debates in the Houses of Parliament. A change was passing over his mind during this period; he resigned his position, and spent two years in retirement, at the close of which he determined to forsake the Romish communion and unite himself to the English, feeling, as he himself said, that he would obtain wider opportunities of doing good. It was in 1787, and in the June of this year he first appeared in a Protestant pulpit, preaching in St. Peter's Church, Dublin. A vast congregation, drawn by curiosity to hear the convert, assembled to listen to him. His powers were at once recognised, but soon the true sphere of his abilities was discovered. During the few weeks of his ministrations at St. Peter's Church the collections on behalf of the poor had shown a decided increase. The sums contributed rose to four or five times the amount previously received. He became the recognised preacher of charity sermons, and

on the 5th of November, 1788, the governors of the day-schools of several parishes entered into the following somewhat singular resolution: "That for the effects which the discourses of the Rev. Walter Blake Kirwan from the pulpit have had, his officiating in the metropolis was considered a peculiarly national advantage, and the vestries should be called to consider the most effectual method to secure to the city an instrument, under Providence, of so much public benefit." So intense was the eagerness of the public to hear him, that at times the military were drawn round the church to keep order. Those who were fortunate enough to secure a place within had to endure the crushing of a crowd frightened out of all sense of decorum. The most unseemly disorder prevailed during the service; but when Kirwan appeared the tumult was stilled; the immense congregation, crowded to suffocation, listened breathlessly for his first syllable; his presence arrested attention and enforced reverence. His general appearance was not prepossessing, but there

was something commanding, almost stern, in his countenance; the tones of his voice, not always or altogether melodious, yet were so marvellously varied to express feeling, and to compel solemnity, that the Lord's Prayer, enunciated before his sermon, became a sermon to his audience. Prayer ended, the text was given out. The sermon we shall select to listen to is on behalf of the Meath Hospital. The text is taken from St. Luke xvi. 25: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

The parable, so well known, denounces a life which may be compatible with perfect tranquillity of conscience. It is not the rich alone who are concerned with this, but all who imagine that the way of salvation may be strewed with flowers, and an immortal prize aspired to without treading in the steps of a crucified Leader. It is not a life of iniquity which is pictured; but a man satisfied with the enjoyments of the time present, and forgetful of the noble purpose for which

he was born. Free from all heinous sin, he yet is a witness of the truth, that it is only too possible to be at once completely justified by the maxims of the world, and wofully condemned by the rules of religion. "And the rich man also died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes."

But how does it happen that the most strenuous efforts of the ministry are unequal to produce profound impressions on such a destiny? The truth is either disbelieved, or only languidly confessed. Every corner is ransacked for a reason against believing what we are unwilling to believe. The Pharisees are an example. They strove to explain away the evidence in Christ's favour, and when this was found too difficult a task, self-interest or passion took refuge under another plea. They discovered that He was aided by Beelzebub. If, then, we are content to face the truth, we must view with horror that temporal gospel, accommodated to the delicacy and manners of semi-Christians. Under such a gospel there can be no security. The religion of Christ has its lines written in self-

denial. The cross is to be borne after Christ. But can it be said that this truth is generally felt, if the Christian be bound to warfare against his corrupt affections, and yet nourishes these enemies; if the Christian be not of this world, and yet is the slave of its pursuits; if the Christian be bound to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, and yet lives in a whirl of folly, or in the lap of self-complacency; if the Christian be a traveller sighing for a view of his everlasting country, and yet would establish his abode in this vale of tears; if the Christian views affliction as a merciful chastisement, and prosperity as a danger, and yet recoils from the one, and seeks the other; in a word, if the Christian be spiritual and yet earth-loving? As an example, witness the woman of fashion, her morning *ennui*, her sauntering objectless ramble in the streets, her passionate avidity for dissipation, her neglected home, her children committed to the mercy or inattention of menials, unblessed by a mother's tenderness, and her life of frivolousness, only redeemed by occasionally offering to God the

wanderings of a mind stupefied and corrupted by the never-ending worship of the world! This life, poured out on the altar of the world, wins not even the world's reward. If, in deference to the world, she adopts the prevailing indelicacy of attire, those whom she seeks most to please are often her cruellest censors. Against such a tendency parents should watch; for children are the redeemed of Christ, entrusted to them to rear for Him. Then is religion gloomy and austere? No! founded on benevolence, religion is not the enemy of joy. We are directed to rejoice with those who rejoice. Christ sanctified earth's innocent mirth at Cana. But we are not to confound what religion admits with what the world supposes it to admit. To seek society only for edification; this is the gospel. To neglect sacred occupations, to live in a confusion of night and day; this is the world. To look upon our superfluities as the patrimony of the poor; this is the gospel. To labour to outdo one another in excessive and luxurious entertainment, to starve a family for a month in order to glitter for a night; this

is the world. To take part in conversations only in which reason can gain, or our religion be edified; this is the gospel. To spice speech with slander, to be silent from self-interest when religion is reviled, perhaps infamously to join in the abuse of what we inwardly revere; this is the world. And what indulgence can we expect from the supreme Searcher of hearts when the moment we reflect we surely condemn ourselves? In the last day thus shall we be judged: our convictions will be opposed by our actions, our secret sentiments to our public practice, ourselves to ourselves, and our souls before the tribunal of God be at once the criminal and the witness against us. This truth will be clear then, when it is too late, that we had on earth enough reason and witness against the course of life we led. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Such a life of worldliness and ease cannot fail to close compassion against the needs of the famishing and needy. The rich man is

not an instance of deliberate inhumanity, but a sad evidence that when the soul is immersed in the enjoyments of sense, the most sacred obligations of mercy are overlooked.

Then followed an appeal on behalf of the charity. The sermon and the appeal were like the wand of a magician: hearts were reached, pockets were opened. Those who went prepared with a certain sum and no more were overcome, and watches and earrings went into the plate, and the vestry next day was crowded by the pilgrims who had come to redeem their pledges.

His power lay in his manner. "There never was," says a writer who heard him, "such an actor. He drew tears once from his whole congregation, and more than that, all the money out of their pockets, by a single sentence. It was his custom to preach once a year a charity sermon for the children of St. Peter's. The anniversary had arrived. The church was, as usual, crowded to the ceiling. The children, boys and girls (some hundreds), were ranged in galleries fronting the pulpit. A rumour had got abroad that

Kirwan was taken ill, and it was so. But he appeared to his time, though manifestly enfeebled. He got through the prayer, and, amid dead silence and breathless expectation, stood for a moment mute. His bosom heaved, his whole frame trembled; he looked up to the galleries; his heart seemed breaking, as with uplifted hands and full eyes he exclaimed, 'My poor, poor children, I am unable to plead your cause,' and sank back into his seat."

The effort of his sermons proved too much for his frame. His doctors would only permit him to take a few charity sermons each year; but even this exertion hastened his death, and he fell a victim to his fervent labours on behalf of the sick and the fatherless. To use the beautiful language of Henry Grattan, "In feeding the lamp of charity, he exhausted the lamp of life." No gorgeous display of funeral pomp attended him to the tomb, but a more fitting and touching tribute than any magnificent mourning bore witness to his worth. The charity children of Dublin by thousands followed him to his

grave. Conquerors and kings might have envied such obsequies.

"Kirwan," is the language of Chief-Justice Bushe, "Kirwan, that great man, revived, if he did not create, the eloquence of the pulpit. . . . With a holy indignation he smote the great ones of the earth, and denounced them before God. Pride, like Felix, trembled before him. His eloquence, at once commanding and pathetic, opened all the sources of compassion and forced all the fortresses of vice. Flinty avarice, callous profligacy, selfish ambition, all melted before him; their tears and their alms flowed together. Captivity was released, the fatherless were adopted, the widow's heart sang for joy."

But though his powers were thus highly rated by his contemporaries and his countrymen, his sermons are not worth any prolonged attention. Indeed, they are not sermons, but impassioned appeals, calculated to tear away the mask from indulgent vice and show ease its own selfishness. There is in them much which is noise, and nothing more; but if we can throw ourselves into the atti-

tude of a listener, and revive in imagination the scene, the crowds, the children, the preacher, we shall find in half an hour's reading some thoughts that cannot fail to arrest and interest our attention.

THE END.

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